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Contents

ROY HARRIS	DAVID CRYSTAL: <i>Who Cares About English Usage?</i> 124pp. Penguin. £1.95.
JULIAN BARNES	W. F. Bolton: <i>The Language of 1984 - Orwell's English and ours</i> 225pp. Oxford: Basil Blackwell in association with André Deutsch. £19.50 (paperback, £7.50).
CATHERINE PETERS	Eric Partridge: <i>A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English</i> 864
PETER ACKROYD	Ralph W. V. Elliott: <i>Thomas Hardy's English</i> 866
ANTHONY STORR	Hazel Holt and Hilary Pym (Eds.): <i>A Very Private Eye - The diaries, letters and notebooks of Barbara Pym</i> 868
KEITH HANLEY	Angelica Garnett: <i>Derived with Kindness - A Bloomsbury childhood</i> 868
IAN MCGILCHRIST	Kenneth R. Johnson: <i>Wordsworth and The Recluse</i> 862
LACHLAN MACKINNON	Paul A. Cantor: <i>Creation and Creator - Myth-making and English Romanticism</i> 862
BRIAN ALDISS	Philip Davis: <i>Memory and Writing - From Wordsworth to Lawrence</i> 862
DAVID NOKES	R. C. Finucane: <i>Appearances of the Dead - A cultural history of ghosts</i> 863
JOHN KLUTE	Ellen Galford: <i>Mull Culpurse - her true history</i> 864
JILL NEVILLE	A. L. Barker: <i>Relative Successes</i> 864
A. J. MINNIS	Thomas M. Disch: <i>The Businessman</i> 864
BENEDICTA WARD	Rosa Guy: <i>A Measure of Time</i> 864
ARTHUR TERRY	V. A. Kolve: <i>Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative - The first five Canterbury Tales</i> 865
J. M. COCKING	Pauline Stafford: <i>Queens, Concubines and Dowagers - The bigamy in the early Middle Ages</i> 865
JORGE CALADO	Federico Garcia Lorca: <i>Selected Letters</i> 866
KEITH WALKER	Stéphane Mallarmé: <i>Correspondance - Novembre 1897-Septembre 1898</i> 866
TOM PHILLIPS	Alexander Todd: <i>A Time to Remember - The autobiography of a chemist</i> 868
ZINOVY ZINIK	Guy Hurlbut and T. E. Allibone: <i>Cockcroft and the Atom</i> 868
HAROLD HOBSON	Letters on Freud and Modernism, Editing Yeats, Andrew Mott etc 868-9
ELISABETH CROLL	Among this week's contributors 868
RICHARD HARRIS	Commentary
WILLIAM SCOTT	Samuel Johnson 1709-84 (Arts Council)
SHERIDAN OILLEY	Kai Kin Yung: <i>Samuel Johnson 1709-84</i>
A. M. ALLCHIN	Richard Ingrams (Editor): <i>Dr Johnson by Mrs Thrale: The "Anecdotes" of Mrs Popham in their original form</i> 870
COLIN GREENLAND	T. F. Wharton: <i>Samuel Johnson and the Theme of Hope</i> 870
SAVKAR ALTINEL	Michael Pennington: <i>Amos Chekhov (Cuttsloe Theatre)</i> 871
REYNER BANHAM	Anton Chekhov: <i>Wild Honey (Lyttelton Theatre)</i> 871
HUGH MACDONALD	Anthony Mingella: <i>A Little Like Drawing (Hamstead Theatre)</i> 871
ROBIN EVANS	Author, Author - 871
ERIC KORN	Fifty years on 871
GAVIN EWART	Ross Terrill: <i>The White-Boned Demon - A biography of Madame Zedong</i> 872
BERNARD O'DONOGHUE	Jane Hunter: <i>The Gospel of Gentility - American women missionaries in nineteenth-century China</i> 872
PAUL QUARRIE	François Oudon: <i>La Jeunesse sous Thermidor</i>
Cover picture	Michel Vovelle: <i>The Fall of the French Monarchy</i>

Soft sell and soft soap

Roy Harris

DAVID CRYSTAL
Who Cares About English Usage?
124pp. Penguin. £1.95.
0 14 02 254 7
W. F. BOLTON
The Language of 1984: Orwell's English and ours
225pp. Oxford: Basil Blackwell in association with André Deutsch. £19.50 (paperback, £7.50).
0 631 13658 4

George Orwell's answer to the question posed by the title of David Crystal's book would have been "Not enough of us". Had Orwell actually read *Who Cares About English Usage?*, he might perhaps have added: "And not for the right reasons, either". Crystal's "entertaining guide to the common problems of English usage" is advertised as being based on correspondence from listeners to his radio programme *Speak Out*: so he certainly has some evidence to support his identification of particular points of usage as "problems". But why his radio audience finds the problems problematic is another question.

As broadcaster-cum-university-professor-of-linguistics, Crystal must be in just the position to tell us why, and it is almost the only question of real interest which emerges from his discussion of the familiar agonizing about split infinitives, ending sentences with prepositions, etc. But his answers are on the whole disappointing. He is too quick to put the blame for the existence of the problems themselves on a motley assortment of culprits: these include pedants, schoolmasters, authors of grammar books, elocutionists, logicians, snobbish parents, chauvinists, and in general those who are prejudiced and narrow-minded in linguistic matters. This, however, merely substitutes Aunt Sally for explanations. It is like supposing that most political problems are caused by the dogmatism of theorists and the bigotry of party hacks.

Those who turn to Crystal's book for practical linguistic advice will find a sympathetic, cheerful and rather avuncular adviser. One is reminded irresistibly of the jolly GP whose consultation-room teatime is bright and breezy, though his remedy is aspirin. Perhaps, after all, this is the most effective way of dealing with linguistic surgery queues. What is one to make, for example, of the patient who complains:

I have never been able to assimilate so much as the rudiments of grammar. Countless times my daughter has explained the difference between a noun and pronoun, a verb and an adverb. I always say "Thank you darling, I think I have it now." But within minutes, I've forgotten again. To me, a preposition was always the placing of one's left foot in a stirrup, before throwing one's right leg over the back of a horse?

A doctor who cites this case history as an example of his patients' troubles risks inviting the suspicion that he must be having us on; or that some of his patients are having him on. If all this is serious; on the other hand, it seems to reduce the requirements for expertise as a physician to little more than shrewd prescription of the right placebo. But that is not quite the whole story. With words as with bodies: the first task of the "expert" professions has always been to persuade the public to treat them as the experts. The modern Hippocratic style is to acknowledge every complaint as one requiring advice; and then persuade the patient that the affliction is not so terrible after all. That way society gets more doctors, more patients, and everybody is happier in the end.

Faced with unflinching jovial professionalism of this order, whether in the treatment of physiological or linguistic ailments, only those intelligent enough to want to know what confidence to place in the professional advice they are being offered are likely to try to figure out for themselves what lies behind it. The game is given away in Crystal's case by his radio-doctor's list of "common problems". It includes: the adverb *only*, the pronunciation of *r*, syllabic stress (how should you pronounce *controversy*), near-homonyms (like *ceremonious* and *ceremonial*), double negation, "vulgar" expressions, syntax of prepositions, and agree-

ments for number and gender. In a word, all the old pedagogic *bêtes noires* are out in full force. The "problems" of English usage recognized by Crystal's BBC patients boil down for the most part to a dreary inventory of points they have been educated - or mis-educated - into believing to be both tricky and important to get right.

Crystal's cure is soft-sell prescriptivism. His doctor's manner is remarkable for the lengths to which he goes in disguising prescriptivism by selling it to the patient as anti-prescriptivism. We leave the surgery reassured that there's nothing really wrong; but at least we have had a chat about taking care, and a hint for a bottle of medicine as well, just in case. A typical example is the treatment handed out to patients suffering from worries about double negation. The English language, the doctor explains, really has two different negative constructions, one being single negation ("He never had any money") and the other being double negation ("He never had no money"). "But which is 'right'?" asks the patient. "Both" is the doctor's answer. With a shrug of the professional shoulders, he advises us to pay no attention to

can't be anything "really" bad about it, can there? Just make sure you don't indulge in too much, or do it when policemen are about. Policemen are remarkably fussy about such things. Next patient, please.

Crystal claims that his aim is to help his readers "develop a sense of priorities, when faced with usage problems" and concludes with a plea for tolerance. He dephrases the fact that sometimes "unthinking language can lead to misunderstanding, discord, open hostility". He hopes that out of greater linguistic tolerance will come greater social tolerance. All good liberal sentiments. What is missing from this optimistic communal linguistic health programme is any recognition of the fact that the institutionalization of value judgments about the ways people speak and write their native language has become one of the essential ways of establishing and maintaining power relations within a literate society. Bland talk about standard English as if it were just like school arithmetic or accepted conventions for weights and measures disguises this basic sociolinguistic reality; and the weasel word *standard* itself fosters the deception.



Jan Breckwell's photograph "Wordscape" (1970); reproduced from *The British Council Collection 1938-1984* (1983pp. British Council. £10. 0 86355 020 7), a complete, illustrated record of its collection of 4,500 works of art, published to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the Council.

old-fashioned purists who condemn double negation on grounds of "logic". Both single and double negation are perfectly logical: it's just that the logic in the two cases is different. The logic of single negation is based on the principle that two negatives cancel each other out; whereas the logic of double negation is based on the principle that "If you want to emphasize a negative meaning, then the more negative words you put in the better." Neither principle, and neither type of construction, is better than the other. Some languages use one, and some the other. In the course of the consultation, it emerges that the single negative construction is preferred, for no very good reason, in a certain variety of English called "standard" English; but the equally legitimate double negative is admissible in almost all other varieties of English. So it's up to you, Mr X, which to choose. Opt for "standard" English if you want to; but don't make the mistake of thinking there is something wrong with the syntax of those who opt for other varieties of English. It may interest you to know that in other languages (French, for example) double negation is actually approved in "standard" varieties and recommended even by the most conservative grammarians. Of course, whatever language you are speaking you mustn't use too many negatives all at once, or you will get everyone in a muddle. But there's nothing wrong with piling up negatives in moderation: provided they don't prevent people understanding what you mean.

As a piece of grammatical therapy this is just about on a par with telling mentally confused British motorists who mix up left and right that there is nothing wrong with choosing to drive on the right-hand side of the road provided you don't knock anyone down: for that is indeed the rule of the road on the Continent. So there

Crystal more than once emphasizes the difficulty of drawing a clear distinction between "right" and "wrong", and that is not unconnected with the fact that he is extremely vague about what makes the right and the wrong in any case. Sometimes he speaks of a class of linguistic good guys called "educated people". Do they decide? Sometimes we hear of another class of good guys called "excellent writers". Do they decide? Or does correct usage mysteriously emerge from some obscure process of collective decision, like the "general will" of certain social theorists? Crystal does not tell us, and this is of a piece with his tacit assumption that all one needs to sort out most questions of usage is sound common sense, respect for "good" examples, linguistic charity, and perhaps a knowledge of the history of English and a few other languages would come in handy too. British compromise triumphs yet again.

Conspicuously absent from Crystal's list of problems are any of the more serious issues of usage which concerned Orwell. What worried the author of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was, for example, the fact that the word *pacification* was being used to describe the indiscriminate murder of civilian populations. This, by Crystal's standards, simply would not count as "earring about English usage". Nor, unfortunately, does it count for much either in W. F. Bolton's *The Language of 1984: Orwell's English and ours*. Curiously, Professor Bolton devotes a whole chapter to the topic of "Language Abuse", but never gets round to why Orwell believed such usage to be objectionable, or whether he was right.

It may be that Bolton sees nothing objectionable at all in using the word *pacification* to describe, say, United States military operations in Vietnam or Russian manoeuvres in Afghan-

istan. On the other hand, it may be that he regards the objections as too obvious to require comment. In either case, he is wrong. There is no obligation more incumbent upon contemporary historians of English than to investigate why language-users hold the views they do about the proper use of words. To take it for granted that the user's assumptions are also the investigator's assumptions is to make a mockery of honest philology.

As a commentator, Bolton acknowledges and apologizes for his own "unsympathetic view" of Orwell. Unashamedly, he uses Orwell as a peg on which to hang chapters devoted to such topics as linguistic change, class and regional dialects, and literary style, which in themselves have nothing to do with Orwell at all, even though Orwell's remarks about language reflect some recognition of them. One gets the impression that the book might just as well have been *The Language of Mrs Thatcher* or *The Language of Arthur Scargill* if either Mrs Thatcher or Arthur Scargill had provided enough quotable dicta about language to provide chapter headings. This impression is reinforced by Bolton's constant emphasis on the naive nature of most of Orwell's pronouncements about language, an emphasis which obscures certain more interesting issues and makes it difficult to see why Orwell is linguistically significant at all.

Orwell did indeed make a great fuss about the same kind of trivial verbal matters as those which allegedly perplex the listeners to Crystal's radio programme. But this merely establishes - or casts doubt on - Orwell's literary *bona fides*. It raises much the same questions as his more exaggerated attempts to put himself in the position of the "down-and-out" in London or Paris. As a former member of the Burma police, he must have known perfectly well what a word like *pacification* meant in the context of colonialism. Otherwise, implausibly, one has to see him as a kind of innocent linguistic taxpayer who is suddenly scandalized to learn that the money he contributes to a "defence" budget helps to pay for the development of blatantly offensive weapons. But whether Orwell himself was a linguistic simpleton or a linguistic charlatan - or a mixture of both - is not the crucial question. What cries aloud for analysis is the contemporary appeal of his blunt way of expressing moral conviction in terms of linguistic hygiene. Every Orwellian cliché carries a health warning on the packet.

Readers of Bolton's book will look in vain for any discussion of such controversial matters. Nor should they expect to find a considered linguistic assessment of Newspeak, the most famous language of twentieth-century fiction. (For this, they would do far better to read Paul Chilton's recent essay on that topic.) It is a pity, in short, that a book with the title *The Language of 1984* fluffs the unique opportunity to face the challenge represented by Orwellian linguistics. It may well be true, as Randolph Quirk observes, that "the intellectual framework displayed in the principles of Newspeak is very weak and damagingly inconsistent". It may equally well be true that Orwell himself believed in a naive equation between plain language and rigorous thinking. But such minor details can be left for any competent M Litt student to pick up and spin into a chapter. The substantive issues raised belong to a different level in the history of ideas.

Is Orwellian logophobia simply a continuation of the traditional scepticism of Cratylus, of Boetius, and of so many other thinkers in the Western tradition who have found words to be intellectually untrustworthy? Or does it mark - either because of or in spite of Orwell's personal intertwining of the issues - the beginnings of a new moral, political and ideological critique of language? How does one explain the contrast between the apparent shallowness of Orwell's views on good usage and the profound imaginative power of his Newspeak parable? At times it seems that Bolton is about to address such questions. But in the end he shies away from them and returns monotonously to his pet theme, that most of what Orwell said about language had been said before, and was not theoretically very sound anyway. This is academic caution carried to the point of obtuseness. Prophets are not to be judged by the originality of their ideas, or by their cogency either.

John 13:16

Julian Barnes

ERIC PARTRIDGE
A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional
English
Eighth edition, edited by Paul Beale
1,400pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £45.
0710098200

This is the final Partridge, the last edition to contain new material by the man who first started it all in 1937, and whose most famous work it will remain. The whole thing has been reset, revised and reprinted; while the sprawling supplement (which by the seventh edition was threatening to become as large as the base dictionary itself) has been packed back into the main text. We can now see even more clearly the virtues of this dogged, all-embracing, humorous, energetic, speculative, unsnobby, celebratory guide to the demotic. And we can see just as plainly its faults: it is print-based, Empire-based, unsystematic, scholarly in rather an approximate sense, scantly dated and plain bang wrong on numerous occasions. The dictionary has become the victim of its own decades of history, and of its own individuality, and it emerges into this eighth edition as something splendid, lovable, irritating and unreliable, a monstrous growth, a book and a concept which have run their course and have nowhere to go: it is a Partridge up a gum tree.

For successive generations of the bookish, Partridge served as repository and guardian to the socially and morally disadvantaged lexis. That's to say, it was the place where you went to look up dirty words. Seeing them in print gave them the impress of legitimacy (more important than it perhaps sounds); while Partridge's sheer existence helped – as far as lexicography can – to liberate and vivify the language. Part of the dictionary's flirting charm lay in the crafty way Partridge would often set a definition of some archness, if not actual obscenity, beside a roughly vernacular headword. *Ready to spit*, for instance, is glossed as "upon the point of *urethrorrhoea ex libidine*: low", which seems to obfuscate things quite successfully (excluding the sex of the spitter). Partridge had other endearingly idiosyncratic habits of definition with his rude words – like that of inserting the world's most otiose adjective when glossing *knockers*, *bristles* (and the few million parallel terms) as "female breasts". This characteristic manner has rightly been retained by Paul Beale.

It's a pity, then, that the sex words aren't treated in the later editions with quite the same authority that they once were, or seemed to be. (Perhaps lexicographical rakes can tire of the whole business as much as real ones.) *Rim*, for instance, is misdefined in such a radical way that sexual punters would get a long hard shock if they received what Partridge thinks the verb intends. *Closet queen* is eccentrically (and limitingly) defined as "a crypto-homosexual (male, passive)". *Suck off* bears the baffling note "Not restricted – any more than *suck* is – to Lesbians" (who ever thought it was?). *French lessons*, which must be the most widely known piece of prostitutes' advertising jargon, simply isn't recorded (it isn't in the *OED Supplement* either); nor is the euphemistic model (as in "Model, third floor"). *Clone* isn't in, or *diesel*; indeed, gay slang is under-represented. *First-fucking* is innocently left at its milder sense of "first sexual intercourse", while the extended sense of "first sexual intercourse" (public school and service-men's slang, nineteenth and twentieth century) as "a dull, stupid person"; or "someone ineffectual and generally 'wet'": I don't know if this sense still survives, but it has certainly been overhauled: nowadays the term is one of praise, not derogation, and is applicable to either sex – the equivalent of calling someone "a dish". No doubt this shift in the extended use of the term indicates a more relaxed attitude to the original event.

Edmund Wilson, in the course of a slightly patrician tribute to the *Dictionary* and its maker, recalled that "This reviewer has been using it for years, and he does not remember Partridge's ever bawling let him down". (Such a guarantee of reliability rings a little cracked, however, when you note that three sentences earlier Wilson has managed to misdate the book's first edition by a year.) In fact, Partridge has always been – as that sign advertising

the hamburger chain announces – "the Home of the Whopper". Paul Beale, in an editorial note, reminds us that "E.P. was always a keen sports fan, esp. of cricket and tennis". Well, at least he said "fan" rather than "connoisseur". E.P. defines *beamer* as "a fast, esp. very fast, ball so delivered by the intimidatory bowler that it bounces head-high and causes, or should cause, the batsman to duck" – a perfectly good definition of *beamer* (which isn't in the *Dictionary*); whereas a *beamer* is precisely a ball that doesn't bounce, being a very fast head-high full toss (often delivered by mistake). E.P. defines *wrong 'un* as "the wrong sort of ball to hit", which it may indeed turn out to be, but that's very far from the point; it's the spinner's "other ball" which the batsman fails to read. E.P. defines *dukey drops* as "slow round-arm bowling", thus failing to convey the colourful essence of the style, in which the ball is tossed up to a seemingly ludicrous height, so that its unaccustomed, near-vertical angle of arrival at the wicket area disconcerts the batsman. E.P.'s definition of *golden duck* is in fact the definition for *king pair* (which isn't in). E.P.'s *googly* relies on a much too loose definition by someone else. E.P.'s *Chinese drive* is "a snick through the slips": surely the essence of anything Chinese in cricket (I only know *Chinese cut*, which isn't listed) is that the ball takes the inside edge of the bat, passes between pads and stumps and goes down to fine leg? Paul Beale loyally reproduces all these definitions, unrevised; and if he doesn't know anything about cricket, I suppose we shouldn't blame him for accepting the old fan's wisdom. We might, however, rebuke him mildly for not picking up a later development of *wrong 'un*, as a mildly derogatory term used by heterosexuals (like Michael Parkinson) to denote a homosexual.

The whole area of sporting slang, indeed, is far too reliant on other, earlier dictionaries, and could have done with major revision. Football terms like *clog(ging)*, *nutmeg*, *over the top*, and that delightful gentileism to *put (oneself) about*, which any recumbent viewer of Jimmy Hill can quickly pick up, remain unlisted; *bottle (out)* in its football (and wider sporting) use is not recorded; while the list of nicknames for famous football teams is far from complete or contemporary. From tennis-remembering that Partridge once made "a bit on the side"; Beale, tells us, from reporting Wimbledon for the *Guardian* – we note the absence of *dink*, *choke*, *Americo* *doubles* and *overcook*. From rugby, *scrum* and *maul* are in, but not *ruck*, *rake*, *up-and-under* or the latter's etymologically more interesting version, *garryowen*.

Wessex tmesis

Catherine Peters

RALPH W. V. ELLIOTT
Thomas Hardy's English
287pp. Oxford: Blackwell/Deutsch. £22.50.
0631 136592

Thomas Hardy's *English* is the latest addition to the Language Library series, which includes the witty and elegant contributions of Eric Partridge, the series's first editor, on Swift, and of K. C. Phillips on Jane Austen and Thackeray. In contrast to these contributors' placing of their authors within a social context, Ralph W. V. Elliott stresses Hardy's timelessness, disentangling the idiosyncratic mixture of archaisms and dialectal forms (often themselves words which had a wider currency in earlier times and were fast dying out in the countryside), "literary" language from many sources but from the Bible and Shakespeare above all, and the sprinkling of technical terms from architecture, painting, music and even science and the law. He shows how Hardy marshalled the varied resources of the autodidact into a vocabulary that was both distinctive and flexible, combining different registers, and creating a "Wessex" dialect which was in fact a literary compromise. A necessarily selective glossing of some of the archaisms and dialect words leads to some inconsistency, and the reader who is looking for a Hardy dictionary will often find the notes to the New Wessex edition of the novels more helpful: Professor Elliott, for example, quotes from *Jude* "I be old and low, and it takes me a long while to un-my. I han't unlaced my jumps yet"; he glosses "un-ray" "to undress", but does not explain "jumps", as a form of unbuttoned corset – a sort of primitive liberty bodice – worn, according to the *OED*, by wet-nurses and countrywomen. The discussion of dialectal and obsolete or obsolescent words will perhaps be the least satisfactory section of the book for students of Hardy: a good deal of work has already been done on this part of his vocabulary, by F. B. Pinion, N. Rogers and others.

The most original and rewarding aspects of Elliott's study are his consideration of Hardy's lexical inventiveness and the originality of his syntactical patterns. He rightly calls Hardy's English "determined and ingenious", and shows in detail how his linguistic resourcefulness improved and enlarged the vocabulary available to a late nineteenth-century writer. Hardy learnt from William Barnes not only the use of dialect words for serious as well as comic purposes, but the value of compound epithets in creating a distinctive tone of voice. Elliott's discussion of Hardy's prefixes, and the purposes for which he uses unparaphrased forms of verbs normally subject to tmesis – "inwrapped", "upbrims" – is particularly helpful. He shows, for example, how by using the single word "overpassed" to mean both "inversed" and "overcame, conquered", Hardy adds poignancy to the last stage of Fanny Robin's journey to Casterbridge. He gives convincing

Listing what isn't in a dictionary can be misleading; and it's certainly true that an awful lot of words are in Partridge, many of them correctly defined. But this is, after all, meant to be our premier slang dictionary. Terms in fairly general currency which are omitted include *hog-whimpering* (drunk), *make a Horlicks of*, *not to give a toss about*, *off his trolley*, *what-name*, *NQOCD* and *dimup* (in the luvatorial sense). Cinema slang seems to be left in a 1934 article from *Tit-Bits*; and one looks in vain for the vernacular of television (*cintrav*, *noddies*, *amos*, *walking shot*, *blonde*, *redhead* and so on). Labellings are too frequently a little inaccurate: *eyeball* to *eyeball* is very far from being "orig. journalistic", but is "orig. White House", coming from the Cuban missile crisis and the time when the other fellow – Khrushchev – blinked (the *OED Supplement* gives Dean Rusk in the *Saturday Evening Post* as the phrase's originator; a recent TV dramatist assigned the phrase to Kennedy himself. Wishful thinking, or historical accuracy?) *In a pig's arse* no doubt has been "low Aus: since c. 1945", but I would have thought its currency over here was confirmed (and extended) by Philip Larkin's "Vers de Société". The other half has long ceased to be just "RN coll", but has been mainland drinkers' coll for a long time. And so on.

The entry for *technicolour* vividly demonstrates how the old Partridge traditions are being maintained in this eighth edition. After noting the Australian origin of this phrase for vomiting, the entry continues: "By the very early 1970s, fairly well known in the UK, thanks to the Aus. Barry Humphries' satirical cartoon-strip running, 1971 or 1972, in *Private Eye* (Derek Parker)". There are two disconcerting things here. The first is the hazy dating: what's that "or" doing? No doubt there isn't a full-time librarian at *Private Eye*, but it wouldn't have taken much effort for someone, somewhere down the line, to discover that the Barry Mackenzie strip began much earlier, in July 1964. The second is the bracketed name of the informant. Nothing wrong with Derek Parker, of course; but too frequently in this dictionary you come across less than arcane items of British (or naturalized) slang which have been sent in, and defined as well, by correspondents. Obviously the far-flung radio-tam type of monitoring system which Partridge relied on for his Commonwealth slang had its point, and its necessity; but should correspondents be needed so much for local items?

In fact, there's altogether too much reliance on secondary sources, on lists of words printed in magazines, on Nigel Dempster, Anthony

Hudon-Guest, Philip Howard and even the excellent John Silverlight. The entry for *parrot* clearly the sort of word which buyers of a lexicon would turn to as a test case – *parrot* heavily on Mr Silverlight's column from *Observer*; and he, in turn, refers us to the *Telegraph*. It all feels a bit like petting with rubber gloves on. Then follows Paul Beale's classification and dating: "RN: since ca. 1970". What, one wonders, is the exact evidence for this? Who says it's naval slang – wouldn't it be a hind, given that it's not the Navy but the Piras (or the plain Army) that does the *parrot*ing? And what of the date – is that established by the well-known play of the "Parrot" from the first recorded use and then hope in the best? This technique was vigorously pioneered by E.P. (*dark horse*, for instance, confidently ascribed to "ca. 1830", given his first quotation was from a Disraeli novel of 1831) and is being carried on by Paul Beale. The entry for *Hoorny Henry*, for example, grudgingly cites the present reviewer, writing in March 1979; this (presumably first) quotation then provokes an estimate of currency "from late 1970s". Ten years out! Fifteen!

In 1937, when the first Partridge came out, any honest and wide-ranging slang dictionary must have been more than welcome, its speculations exciting, the roughnesses part of its charm. As the book has expanded, its working principles have made its limitations more apparent. Accuracy is much lower than in the *OED Supplement*. The reading of books where useful slang might occur seems to have tailed off (the bronzed demotic of Martin Amis would surely be a useful source). The over-reliance on printed sources and friendly informants has become more exposed. No doubt part of the answer is lack of publisher's funds. But the other part lies in the alluring dream of the single-handed amateur scholar – an image fostered by the example of Dr Johnson. We would do well to remember that Dictionary Johnson had the use of six full-time amanuenses. If we were starting off on a new dictionary of slang today, you'd probably need a minimum of four people: one language scholar, one expert on one television junkie and one street scouter. You'd drop the Commonwealth connection (language follows politics, so be realistic). You'd try to meet real criminals and not sportsmen instead of combing other dictionaries for their argot. In short, you'd get out there on the street and listen. And then, when you'd finally reported, we could all give our Partridge a clumsy, grateful pat, and slot it affectionately back on the high shelf next to *Crucifera* and Henley, and Barrère and Leland.

explanations of Hardy's frequent preference for unusual word order, though I question whether Hardy's description of Fairfax speaking "with the unmistakable inflection of the lower pure" is, as Elliott thinks, "the exact equivalent of French *de l'ancien pur*, which means 'pure' in the sense of unblemished, chaste" rather than single-minded. "A woman pure" would surely have thrown a different light on Tess's tragedy.

Elliott uses Hardy's phrase "Acres of words" from *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as the title of one of his own chapters. Acres – even continents – of words have already been devoted to the study of Hardy's writing. This latest addition will be of more practical use than many of them, to the general reader as well as the student.

The Year's Work in English Studies, Volume 62, 1981, edited by Laurel Brake (394pp. John Murray for the English Association. £25.00. 03038 8), includes for the first time, in its annual critical bibliography chapters, one on Literary Theory, by Robert Young. It opens with a review of the state of the subject in 1980. The Sixteenth Century, excluding drama after 1550 (dealt with separately by David Daniell on Shakespeare and E. D. Evans on the Renaissance Drama) now has one chapter. Another associate editor, Owen Knowlton, contributes, with Dr Brake, to the chapter on the Victorian Period, and Margaret Morgan and Michael Rhodes are also associate editors of the volume.

Manufacturing Miss Pym

Peter Ackroyd

HAZEL HOLT and HILARY PYM (Editors)
A Very Private Eye: The diaries, letters and notebooks of Barbara Pym
358pp. Macmillan. £12.95.
0333 34995 4

Three months before Barbara Pym's death, in the closing stages of her cancer, she jotted down in her notebook this reflection on the ineluctable processes of life and death: "The whole business as inexplicable and mysterious as the John Le Carré TV serial, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, which we all find so baffling." Perhaps *la extrême* television programmes are a comfort, but they have seldom been used as a metaphor of the human condition in quite this way; and as a result one wonders about Miss Pym.

More than forty years before, while she was an undergraduate at Oxford University, she had written in her diary, "I had to decide between giving my face a steam beauty bath and doing *Beowulf*. I chose the former, and I think the result justified my choice." It is the insouciance which is so comic here, since it is the insouciance which comes not from naivety but from a special kind of detachment: *Beowulf* may well be less beneficial than a beauty bath, and television serials may on occasions symbolize Fate, but there are very few writers who would so gladly and even gleefully connect them. Pym's fiction mingles a similar tone, when plangent lines from the more obscure seventeenth-century poets are introduced in the middle of inconsequential contemporary conversations: is the discrepancy comic, poignant or merely bathetic? One reads on with a mounting sense of suspense which is rarely, if ever, resolved.

As a result, the novelist herself remains something of a mystery, but it is not one which this compilation of her letters and journals does very much to fathom. Here are only the raw (sometimes very raw) materials out of which she stepped in order to assume the role of the "dreadfully splendid" spinster – a theatrical creation which seems to have captured the attention, not only of her loyal English readership, but also of the great world beyond. She is almost bafflingly popular in the United States, for example, where the secrets of the jumble sale and the tea-shop have yet to be revealed.

Quite how she managed this apotheosis is another matter. She had a happy and comfortable childhood – her mother was an assistant organist in the local church, and her father sang in the choir; it was the sort of household in which unmarried curates came to dinner, meals later to be immortalized in her own fiction where chickens are always being cooked in a difficult sauce. After an average career at school, she went up to Oxford in 1931 in order to read English; she seems to have lived entirely for pleasure – if one can call it that, since most of her time was consumed in a bedraggled passion for a young man called Henry Harvey or, in her fevered imagination, "Lorenzo". He married a Finn, unfortunately, and Pym suffered her first but not her last agonies of betrayal (she occasionally adopted a Finnish accent in later life, apparently for comic effect).

But even as she was enduring the strains of this unhappy love affair she was able to employ them: while at Oxford she began her first novel, *Some Tame Gozelle*, in which by an act of instinctive genius she transposed her friends into a bewildered or frustrated middle age – Pym herself emerging in the character of a "contented spinster". Her sister writes in the introduction to *A Very Private Eye*, "We had a saying that Barbara used to make things happen by writing about them"; one might say that, more importantly, she made herself "happen" in just such a fashion.

From the rather scattered records collected here it would seem that Oxford, despite the romantic ordeals which she suffered there, represented her happiest period; certainly her diaries suggest that her life in the late 1930s was that of an unhappy and dissatisfied young woman (who describes herself as an "old woman"), unable to get her novel published, and experiencing all the horrors of unrequited love: it was during this period, in fact, that she learned what she called "the technique of misery". At the beginning of the War she became a censor of civilian letters, an occupation from which she seems to have derived enormous satisfaction, and then she joined the Wrens where she fussed over her "page boy" haircut. There is something oddly uninteresting about such a life, and yet she seems to know that it is dull and is even able to dramatize the fact – this is what, in the end, makes her remarkable. It is a paradoxical set of circumstances, almost a "double bluff", but it was the making of the novelist.

And indeed it was, after the War that she enjoyed a measure of success; she joined the International African Institute and became assistant editor of *Africa*, its house journal. Perhaps anthropologists enter her novels so frequently because she discovered that she had more in common with them than at first she thought; she transcribes one pertinent academic remark in her notebook which might almost be a definition of her fiction: "It is important that not even the slightest expression of amusement or disapproval should ever be displayed at the description of ridiculous, implausible or disgusting features in custom,

cult or legend." Such coolness – what one might call professional detachment – served her own purposes very well, and it was during these years that she wrote the five novels which mark the "middle period" of her work.

And then in the 1960s her "career" (although she might have laughed at the word) went into sharp decline: her books were considered unsuitable for contemporary taste (principally, it seems, because she was not an American) and she resigned herself to an enforced but not ignoble silence. She contracted breast cancer in 1971, and suffered a stroke three years later. It was not until 1977, when her fiction was praised in the *TLS* by Philip Larkin and Lord David Cecil, that she enjoyed a second spring; everyone discovered that they had liked her novels all along (including the publishers who had rejected them) and she quickly became something of a cult – a cult which has, of course, attracted even more votes since her death in 1980.

This, then, is the bare life as it is recorded in somewhat unappetizing form in this volume. It was not an existence full of incident, and the blandness of its presentation here would certainly not excite much curiosity – if it were not for the fact that another Barbara Pym emerges from these pages almost by accident. Sometimes her diary style is that of a female Pooter, although on occasions her informal meanderings take on the characteristics of her fiction and capture the weariness of life full blast: "We have no rights, said Barbara in a dull, flat voice." But her apparent ordinariness is rendered interesting principally because it is combined with extreme oddness: in her more exuberant moments she called herself "Sandra" and embroidered cushions with that name; she "tailed" people who intrigued her; and there is a remarkable correspondence which follows the shock of Henry Harvey's desertion. At the age of twenty-seven, in letters to her friends, she begins to create the character of "Miss Pym": "But this spinster, this Barbara Mary Crampton Pym, she will be smiling to herself – ha ha ha she will be saying inside. *But I have that within me which passeth show* . . . she is a queer old horse, this old brown spinster . . . all shut up like oyster or like clam." One gets the impression of some malevolent old party, with a gleam in its eyes, whispering slightly malicious things under its breath as it rocks in its chair.

The real Miss Pym was never quite as bad as that, of course, but there is no doubt that her spinster's role was a defensive one; by turning love into something resembling "woollen combinations", she was able to deal with the pain of its loss. And yet, more interestingly, it was only by creating such a character that she was able to find and to marshal her material – at once she had discovered the "tone" with which she

could explain and dominate the world. It almost seems, in fact, that the rest of her life was devoted to preserving and confirming "this old brown spinster" – her unsatisfactory love affairs run almost too true to form to be entirely fortuitous. She is digging into her new identity, as you might "dig in" under fire.

In her novels, also, the central figure is characteristically and self-consciously unattractive, unimportant, boring, fit only to be a *confidante*. And if a novel such as *Excellent Women* has a flaw, it is that this insistently thin and grey note finds its echo in all those figures bustling from church fête to sherry party and then back again. The characters (one thinks) are being destroyed by their circumstances, and yet surely they enjoy being so destroyed? The cards are always stacked against women like Belinda and Mildred, but sometimes one tires of seeing those cards laid out like a more than usually protracted game of patience. And this is the problem with "Miss Pym" as a creation: for it is almost as if the deliberate invention of herself spills over into the novels and so on occasion renders them heavy-handed.

That she was thus deliberate is made quite clear in this book itself, which displays her highly developed self-consciousness. "A real B. Pym situation" she will exclaim about some small piece of business; "Keep that and quote it in my biography," young man from the University of Texas" she writes in a letter long before her fame was by any means assured; and in 1941 she addresses "you (Gentle Reader in the Bodleian) . . .", suggesting that even in her notebooks (which were indeed deposited in that library) her attempt at self-definition was spurred on by the presence of a putative audience. "It is better to be dramatic than just a lonely spinster," she once wrote, "though it comes to the same thing in the end."

It is this ability, or need, to dramatize herself which gives that peculiar flavour to her writing, in which intimacy and detachment are subtly commingled, in which the banality of self-identification and the brilliance of her thoroughly cold gaze are dissembled in comedy. This volume only gives fitful intimations of the real Miss Pym, who does not stare out of the jolly photographs and who is not found in the merciless chit-chat about cats or clothes – "black blouse (C & A £4.90)". It may not even be the Miss Pym whom her admirers care to see, and yet it is always there. Within this unwieldy mass of letters and documents, the dominant image is of a single-minded, almost obsessive, woman. It has often been remarked that her material remains much the same from book to book, but that is because this material formed not only her fiction but also the carapace which she placed around herself, and which will be remembered long after her "life" has been forgotten.

all its aspects, and Angelica Garnett's perception that lack of physical affection between Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, and, as she believed, between Virginia and Leonard Woolf, had something to do with delaying her own sexual maturation is surely accurate. She writes of Virginia Woolf, "I could imagine her in bed with no one, in spite of her obvious femininity . . . Virginia remained a virginal, bony creature, stalking her way through life, like a griffin." Vanessa, on the other hand, is painted as an Earth Goddess, maternally protective of Duncan Grant, masochistically sacrificing her own sexual needs which, after 1918, he said he could no longer fulfill; a provider of food and comfort acutely aware of the visual world, but by no means an intellectual. She emerges as by far the most important and equivocal figure in the book, and it is not surprising that her daughter Angelica found it difficult to emancipate herself from the emotional hold which her mother had upon her.

Bloomsbury is often painted as a self-regarding, self-indulgent, intellectually snobbish society, but the damage which its artificiality and alienation from ordinary emotions could inflict upon a growing child has not before been portrayed with such perceptivity accuracy. Many of Mrs. Garnett's vignettes are amusing; as when, for example, she writes of Leslie Stephen, "with his unbalanced image of jump, self, he had little idea of the effect he produced on young and tender nature. Always prone to the purple passages of self-indulgence, he was, in spite of the sense of proportion that emerges from his writing, thrown into an excess of self-pity by his wife's death." This book is a highly interesting example of how the creative act can purge the soul of past trauma. Mrs. Garnett tells us that, though short, the book took her seven years to write. "To a professional author this must seem ridiculous, but to me it represents nothing so much as an emergence from the dark into the light." Whatever encounters Angelica Garnett may or may not have had with psychiatrists, my guess is that writing this book has been a piece of self-analysis which no professional could match.

Virginia Woolf's Literary Sources and Allusions: A guide to the essays by Elizabeth Steele, published by Garland, 136 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 (375pp. \$39.00 \$240 9169 8) is organized alphabetically and includes an index of authors and titles. In it are described the bibliographical background as well as the allusions contained in Woolf's collected essays. In her foreword Miss Steele tells us that in considering "the factor that went into the making of the collected essays" she was able to study some sixty-six collections of Woolf's reading notes at Monk House, the University of Sussex, and in the New York Public Library.

The safety-net of friendship

Anthony Storr

ANGELICA GARNETT
Deceived with Kindness: A Bloomsbury childhood
181pp. Chatto and Windus. £9.95.
07011 2821 6

One's heart may sink at the thought of yet another book about Bloomsbury, but this is a very interesting one. It is, as the author admits, a therapeutic exercise; an attempt "to describe my own ghosts, and, in doing so, to exorcise them".

Angelica Garnett was born on Christmas Day, 1918, to Vanessa Bell. Ostensibly the daughter of Clive Bell, Vanessa's husband, she was in fact fathered by Duncan Grant. It was not until after the death of Julian Bell, Vanessa's elder son, during the Spanish Civil War, that Vanessa told her who her father really was. The revelation came as no surprise; in spite of the fact that Duncan Grant was predominantly homosexual. Years before, a friend at school had suggested that Angelica was Duncan's daughter, and "a flash of clairvoyance told me that she was right". Although Angelica maintained good relations with both of her "fathers", neither of them ever gave her what she really wanted. Perhaps it was this lack which later led to her love affair with, and

marriage to, David Garnett, who was not only her senior by a quarter of a century, but who had also, for several years, been the homosexual lover of her true father. It is not surprising that, in spite of the birth of four daughters, the Garnett marriage did not survive. The same insecurity which led to her choice of a father-figure as a husband, left her still tied to her mother and father and unable to commit herself fully to someone else.

The more we learn about Bloomsbury, the more it emerges as an incestuous, bisexual potpourri: Angelica Garnett was clearly its emotional casualty. In a closed society in which the cardinal sin is to obstruct the needs of friends for emotional fulfillment, whether or not that fulfillment is sought with one's own lover of the moment, love takes second place to friendship, and in fact becomes devalued or impossible. We are told that *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* was "a Bloomsbury favourite", and, as such, presented by Clive Bell to his putative daughter. But there is a sense in which Bloomsbury liaisons were not dangerous enough. The safety-net of "friendship", the attempt to suppress jealousy and hurt, prevented more than passing sexual commitment, without which love is pallidly incomplete.

A secondary effect of this attitude is an absence of the ordinary exchanges of physical affection between parents and children. Devaluing passion is apt to devalue the physical in

all its aspects, and Angelica Garnett's perception that lack of physical affection between Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, and, as she believed, between Virginia and Leonard Woolf, had something to do with delaying her own sexual maturation is surely accurate. She writes of Virginia Woolf, "I could imagine her in bed with no one, in spite of her obvious femininity . . . Virginia remained a virginal, bony creature, stalking her way through life, like a griffin." Vanessa, on the other hand, is painted as an Earth Goddess, maternally protective of Duncan Grant, masochistically sacrificing her own sexual needs which, after 1918, he said he could no longer fulfill; a provider of food and comfort acutely aware of the visual world, but by no means an intellectual. She emerges as by far the most important and equivocal figure in the book, and it is not surprising that her daughter Angelica found it difficult to emancipate herself from the emotional hold which her mother had upon her.

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Roaring girls

David Nokes

ELLEN GOLFORD
Moll Cutpurse: Her true history
221pp. Stramullion. Distributed by Scottish and Northern Book Distribution Co-operative Ltd. 48A, Hamilton Place, Edinburgh EH3 5AX. Paperback, £4.50.
0907343031

She who controls the past controls the future. In 1984 women are seizing enthusiastically on Orwell's dictum, rediscovering a specifically female history not only in the works of neglected women writers, but in the lives of female characters formerly relegated to the sub-plot of history in the narratives of men. *Moll Cutpurse* purports to be the "true", that is fictional, history of Moll Cutpurse, alias Moll Frith, a real woman born in London in the 1580s. In a historical note Ellen Galford explains that the real Moll Frith was "from her earliest years a tom-boy, who would have nothing to do with the toys and pursuits deemed appropriate for little girls". Addicted to tobacco and men's clothing, she was sentenced to perform a public penance for her sin and celebrated by Middleton and Dekker in their play *The Roaring Girl*.

But Ms Galford aims to rescue Moll's reputation from "the fabrications of men". She recreates the exploits of this pioneer in the cause of female liberation and lesbianism in a novel, published by a Scottish-based feminist collective, which is primarily a piece of feminist polemic and only secondarily a work of fiction. Although set in "the teeming world of Shakespeare's London", Galford's novel clearly has the contemporary world and contemporary issues in its sights. The language of the book is sprinkled with a light covering of period terms, and her underworld is peopled by "nips", "foists", "drummers", "morts" and "daxies" who owe their origins only too obviously to the copulation of glossaries with eant dictionaries. But the style and idioms of the book are resolutely modern. There is none of the authentic colloquial vigour or metaphorical excitement of Neshe in this prose. On the contrary, the characters speak a curious form of Women's Group Oldspeak. Moll's harangue to Middleton is typical.

It seems to me that wives to their husbands are at worst slaves, at best whores. . . . They merely rent out their private fields to be tilled and seeded on a longer lue. And if they wish their fee - that is, their keep and credit - they must yield up their obedience along with their bodies.

The book is a form of comic picaresque in which the roaring girls Moll and her lover Bridget travel the country picking pockets, telling fortunes, selling herbal remedies and, above all, outwitting men wherever they go. The men they meet come from all classes and occupations. There are Puritans, playwrights, gypsies, actors, farmers, noblemen, husbands and shopkeepers; but whatever their condition, they all share certain common characteristics. All are selfish, aggressive, boorish, hypocritical and vain. For example, one Sunday the girls encounter a Puritan whose little daughter has broken her arm in a fall from a window as a result of leaning out to watch a dancing bear in the street below. While Moll and Bridget busy themselves washing and setting the child's arm, the father vents himself in bullying tirades. "You Jezebel!" he screamed at the quivering infant, shaking his fist. "You wanton scurvy jade! Know ye the well-deserved punishments the Lord metes out to Sabbath-breakers. . . ." (and so on for several pages).

Prime examples of masculine vanity and selfishness are those notorious male chauvinists Will Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. One day Moll and Bridget happen to meet Shakespeare's sister Judith, who tells a long and tale of her attempts to be accepted as a writer. How she had been ridiculed by her family, deceived and seduced by an actor called Nick, bullied, battered, robbed and insulted by a succession of men. Does any of this sound familiar? It certainly should. Little sister Judith comes with the best feminist pedigree from the pages of *A Room of One's Own*. But Galford dramatizes Woolf's conjecture in the crudest terms. When finally Judith runs to her brother for support, she asks "why the freedom he'd claimed for himself in leaving Stratford

couldn't also belong to me. His only answer was to slap my face, pull my hair, and drag me off to find a carrier who would send me home in a wagon." Similarly Ben Jonson is said to be "but a pale shadow of his mother when it comes to spinning a tale", but of course his poor mum is too busy washing clothes and cooking dinners to have any time for writing. Beneath every great man is a woman whose own greatness has been trampled down, at worst to slavery, at best to whoredom.

Even the transition from Elizabethan to Jacobean is interpreted in sexist terms. Elizabeth is made to embody all the female virtues of warmth and generosity, while James introduces a male era of "sour looks and pious platitudes". Indeed the book offers a series of idealized images of gynococracy at all levels of society. The gypsy queen "whose bright black eyes glittered in a face gnarled like the shell of a walnut" presides over her own happy tribe, dispensing folk wisdom and herbal remedies. Bridget's Aunt is another benign matriarch who "loved and understood the earth she lived on, and knew the name and powers of every weed, every tree, every mushroom". There are several proto-Greenham Common scenes with communities of peace-loving women sitting huddled round their camp-fires, passing round the magic mushrooms and telling tales of the brutalities of men. Moll's own story is an object-lesson in female consciousness-raising. At the start of the book the only remedy for her dissatisfactions that she can envisage is to try to become a man. By the end she has recognized the superiority of her own sex and has become "a female Solomon" counselling the younger members of the sisterhood in the joys of lesbianism. A certain amount of propagandist exaggeration and distortion is inevitable in any radical movement, but the cause of feminist literature and the serious investigation of women's history will not be assisted by such crude attempts at myth-making as this.

Posthumous America

John Clute

THOMAS M. DISCH
The Businessman: A tale of terror
292pp. Cape. £8.95.
0224 022040

The work of Thomas M. Disch has never easily found a home in the land of his birth, and *The Businessman*, his twelfth novel, may well seem as opaque to his fellow Americans as did *334* or *On Wings of Song*, both first published in England. Disch is an ironist in a culture which tends to treat irony as suspect, frivolous, metropolitan. *The Businessman* is the most sustained insult he has yet aimed, from his long internal exile in Manhattan, at that culture.

It is set in the desolate wastelands of suburban Minneapolis, with a short excursion to Las Vegas, where Bob Glandier's wife has fled after seeing in a mystical vision that he will murder her the next time they meet. A year later he finds her there, and strangles her because she left him. She has had an appointment in Samarra. At this point the main action of the novel commences. It is a ghost story.

Coming to restricted consciousness in her grave, Giselle gradually realizes that she has no choice but to haunt her appalling husband until justice is done. Like a further and more terrible suburb of Minneapolis, the afterlife is full of wearying conventions and rules, many of them promulgated by Adah Menken, a dreadful nineteenth-century actress and vengeful who has been left in charge of these first stages of the spirit life. Heaven comes rather later.

Recruits are soon made to the Minneapolis of the dead. Giselle accidentally frightens her cancer-ridden mother to death, and both are joined by the maimed but jocular spirit of John Berryman, who committed suicide eight years earlier and who has been blocked from ascending to a higher state because Adah Menken is covous of his poetry. Having been pregnant when she was murdered, Giselle soon gives birth in great pain to a ghost child of Satan, which commits several ghastly murders in its attempts to save Glandier from the terrors of retribution.

No Kirsch, we're British

David Profumo

A. L. BARKER
Relative Successes
192pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press. £8.95.
0701128399

If A. L. Barker is sometimes described as "a writer's writer", her fiction admired by the few but not perhaps read by the many, it may well be because her novels to date have seldom enjoyed plots as enthralling and quirky as those that have made her short stories so distinctive. There has also been a persistent earnestness in her style that has made the novels more difficult - her last, *A Heavy Feather* (1978), was frankly heavy going. With the appearance of *Relative Successes*, though, she ought to reach that wider readership. The structure may leave something to be desired, but there is in its relaxed prose and succinct ironies a sense of freshness that makes it her most enjoyable work since the earlier satires of circumstance from the 1960s.

The story gets off to a snappy start. A senior business executive on the brink of retirement, James Jessel pays his habitual visit one evening to the home of his old friend Waldo Klein, only to find him missing and his lumpy wife Daisy blurred with drink and unconcerned about his disappearance. Jessel turns uncomfortable detective. It transpires that fifty years earlier the teenage Waldo had invited Jessel to spend his holidays at La Bigorne, a ramshackle farmhouse in the Midi, in the company of his feline and promiscuous Viennese mother. She duly arouses the fascination of proper young James from Dollis Hill, and so begins a life-long love-hate relationship with the son and an obsession with the memory of the mother. So, fifty years on, Jessel packs his wife Connie off on a holiday in Antibes, partly to lay these ghostly passions, and partly in the vague hope of tracking

down his friend.

In this setting, the childless Jessels, married for thirty years, begin to feel their age. Connie tries to make new friends, wondering if her husband could have been less regular, while James, the old haunts, attempting to conjure up the past. Barker is here reworking with great success earlier theme of hers, the difference between adult and adolescent visions of the world, and treats it with an acute, sometimes Lawrentian perceptiveness and an un sentimental touch.

The trouble is that three-quarters of the way through the book we lose sight of the plotting of fugitive Waldo. At their hotel in Jessels meet up with an unusual Northern couple - Midge Brent, a lying kleptomaniac and her petulant younger husband Leslie. The two couples size each other up and their varying backgrounds emerge, the whole begins to lose direction. An awkward change occurs in the action, whereby much of the subsequently seen from Leslie's point of view. The book seems to run out of wind after this and wobbles off to a disappointing close.

There are two aspects of the novel, however, that are supremely well done. The first is the way in which Barker evokes the atmosphere and the scenery of the Cap d'Antibes. There is also the central character of Jessel, an imaginative achievement of the highest order. Once encountered, he will not go away; terrible English, he is suddenly to be glimpsed everywhere. Jessel is physically fussy, the sort of man who sniffs, dries each finger individually, regards every foreign driver as reprehensibly careless, and detests the sun. He complains there is Kirsch on his melon. His own passion failed to recognize him in the Strand. His fastidious speech is one of the best things in the book, and the flashes back to his youthful fatunation are all the more arresting by comparison. Even if nothing much is resolved in the end, *Relative Successes* must at least endow A. L. Barker's reputation as one of our most adroit analysts of embarrassment and waste

ably at home as matron of the endless shopping malls of the true posthumous America. For Giselle, who has suffered the agonies of the damned, there is another solace. After metamorphosing into the shape of a weeping willow, she becomes pura depersonalized spirit free to drift.

The vertigo remains, however. America is a land of hurried haiflings, caught in a web of arbitrary regulations they cannot understand, but slavishly enforced. In this vision lies the terror of *The Businessman*, not in its parodic re-enactment of stock routine. These are stage props, and at times Disch takes an all-too arch pleasure in assembling them. But always the vision of America stays with us: melancholic, subversive and perfectly put.

Making it

Jill Neville

ROSA GUY
A Measure of Time
365pp. Virago. £9.95 (paperback, £3.95).
0860685127

Sure ain't like none of them plty-me nigger books I ever bawled over in my sweet white life. Rosa Guy's heroine picks herself right off the dusty old floor and kicks fate back in the groin, grabbing tight hold of her hard-earned cash even during the 'Depressioo'. So whose skin-tugging stud walks out she just puts a tail on him. Theo be comes back crawling.

Only he wants to put her on the game. But acrobatics areo't Dorino's style; she likes her sex straight, the real ol' fashioned thing. For her, home isn't home without a man in it. Which sure is strange considering Miss Dorino was raped as a child by Mister Norton, one of them white Southern gentlemen with perfect manners.

She got the hell out of Alabama and started living on her wits (boosting) in old New York. But jive-talking Sonny and she have a son. So she leaves the baby with the folks in Alabama

and for ever afterwards Dorine has to send back the supporting money for one bright brother to go through college and to save her rest from destitution. Sometimes she hops in her shiny black Buick and drives Sophia to check the scene, but doesn't like the smell of singed black flesh, the evil in the air; this is strange-fruit country.

Rosa Guy's book is exceptional in that but black folk don't sing the blues about being black; they get clever. It's the good life in Harlem, before the war, when Bessie Smith was stealing her man and Fats Waller was boogying in the background. Dorine sells her self up in an apartment with a doorman, a chauffeur and peach satin lingerie. She's walking down side streets. Sporting folk do dom do. We hated to think of folk no making it. One slip, and there we'd be. Why trouble ourselves?

The novel would crackle with talent and life; talk was all there was, but the street talk and patter suddenly open into surprising insights whenever Dorine thinks. Except for the end, where they wheel in Black Rights and we can almost hear the stately voice of a black editor, this is the best and liveliest book I've read about being black.

Light on the interior eye

A. J. Minnis

V. A. KOLVE
Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The first five Canterbury Tales
551pp. Edward Arnold. £35.
07131 64123

This interesting and copiously illustrated book is set fair to become the standard work on the subject of the iconography or "imagery" (in the medieval sense) of Chaucerian narrative. Its central thesis is that, by concentrating too narrowly on "close reading" of medieval poems, modern critics have neglected an access to literary meaning which was generally available in the Middle Ages, wherein large and controlling images form in the mind as the narrative proceeds and determine the way in which it is remembered. In order to redress the balance, V. A. Kolve offers an introductory survey-chapter on medieval notions of imagery and imagination (this being the faculty supposed to produce phantasms or mental images), an attempt to define a Chaucerian aesthetic in terms of how images function in poems, and readings of the first five Canterbury Tales which suggest that Chaucer's narratives characteristically confirm, and are illuminated by, the general truths embodied in images which were traditional in medieval literature and the visual arts.

Many medieval writers speak not only of reading or hearing a poem but also of "seeing" it. "When one hears a tale read", declares Richard de Fournival, "one perceives the wondrous deeds as if one were to see them taking place." Chaucer's *Man of Law* declares that in the *Legend of Good Women* may be "seen" certain large images: the wounds of Lucrece and Thisbe, the sword on which Dido fell, the tree on which Phyllis hanged herself. According to medieval psychology, such literary images stimulated the reader's imagination and easily passed into, and were easily retained by, the memory. Because of its power of visualization, the imagination was sometimes described as the "eye" of the mind. All these points are well taken and well documented, but it should be noted that imaginative "sight" was only one of several kinds of mental vision distinguished in late-medieval thought. Scholastic philosophers spoke of the "gaze" (*aspectus*) of the intellect. Indeed, the term "mind's eye" commonly designated the intellect's activity: for example, this is what Walter Hilton meant by the "inner eye of the soul". Others postulated more elaborate visual structures. In *De oculis morali* Peter of Limoges described the process of moral perception in terms of a movement from the "casual eye" (of sense) to the "lateral eye" (of imagination) to the "mind's eye" (of reason) and finally to the

"heart's eye" (of will). This schema - which takes its point of departure from Alhazen's anatomy of the human eye - will serve to remind us how scientific fact and didactic metaphor (not to mention dead metaphor) could be elaborately intertwined. They certainly are in Langland's treatment of sight and imagery, to take an extreme case.

Then again, it would have been helpful if the epistemological status of imagination and imaginative thinking had been defined more clearly. Much is offered on the relationship between imagination and memory, but very little on that between imagination and reason and intellect - an omission of some consequence, in view of the stock medieval depiction of imagination as the handmaiden of reason. And, of course, in dream-vision theory intellectual vision was described as being far superior to imaginative vision. The question which must be posed is, how could such a relatively inferior faculty as imagination have been so important in medieval thought and aesthetics? For important it undoubtedly was.

Two major areas of inquiry may profitably be added to Professor Kolve's outline of medieval hypotheses. First, there is the role afforded to literary imagination and imagery in academic poetics. From the Ars expositors of Aristotle thirteenth-century scholars acquired a definition of poetry as imaginative speech. Hermann the German, in translating the *Poetics* as interpreted by Averroes, rendered "imitation" as "imagination". Poetry's appeal to the imagination distinguished it from rhetoric, as did the fact that, while rhetoric taught the way in which men may live with one another, poetry taught the way in which a man may live his own life. By stimulating the individual's imagination with suitable similitudes and examples, poetry influenced his moral choices and thereby achieved its didactic end; this was considered as the "logic of morality" (to use Jean Buridan's term). Hence, an anonymous *questio* on the nature of poetry affirms that Aristotle defined it as "poetic discourse or poetic logic rooted in the imagination" because "every man has most trust in his own estimations and relies particularly on his own imaginings". There matters have been clarified considerably by G. Dehaen's recent study, but they merit fuller consideration and application.

Secondly, there is the sophisticated theory of imagery (both plastic and literary) generated by late-medieval study of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus. In view of the fact that Kolve mentions the way in which mystical writers were interested in imagery drawn from the empirical world "chiefly as a way of defining its opposite: contemplation of the highest kind, in which all images fall away", it is rather disappointing that he does not proceed to identify the medieval *locus classicus* of such thinking.

According to the theory of "anagogic" or "uplifting" imagery found in *The Celestial Hierarchies*, in Scripture poetic and imaginative representations of sacred things are employed out of deference to our limited human understanding. The mind is supposed to proceed from the sensible to the intelligible, from sacred imagery to those spiritual realities which are beyond figure and type. These ideas were highly influential, appearing in encyclopedias, preacher's handbooks, exempla collections, and works designed to encourage popular piety. This material has largely been ignored by literary critics, an honourable exception being Umberto Eco, who has put aspects of Dionysian semiotics to good use in his novel *The Name of the Rose*.

Still, Kolve's intention is to provide not a definitive account of medieval imagination and imagery but rather an iconographic reading of several Canterbury Tales, and he does this extremely well. His book's great strength lies in its richly suggestive analyses of Chaucerian narrative. In *The Knight's Tale*, imagery of the prison/garden and of the amphitheatre is said to dominate; in *The Miller's Tale*, of nature, youth and Noah's Flood; in *The Reeve's Tale*, of death-as-tyrster and the horse unbridled; in *The Man of Law's Tale*, of the ruddresliip and the sea. The fragmentary *Cook's Tale* contains no major narrative image as such, so in this case pictures (mainly of cooks and of mercantile and civic life) are used to identify the tale's "voice and ethos". Throughout, popular traditions of medieval iconography are drawn on, the "more remote corridors of the *Patrologia Latina* or the mythographic treatises" being avoided. Unfortunately, this makes for problems in the case of *The Knight's Tale*, wherein a mythographic treatise, Pierre Bernier's *Ovidius moralizans*, was the direct source for much of Chaucer's imagery relating to the pagan deities. It seems a little perverse to avoid this fact, or to imply that Bersuire's work was researched; actually, it was quite influential in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance. Moreover, while I hold no brief for the indiscriminate use of the *Patrologia*, it must be recognized that many standard glosses on the Bible were as well known as was holy writ itself. They provided the information and the inspiration for many an artist.

But these are fairly minor quibbles. *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative* illustrates the fact that those who profess to know only "the text" of *The Canterbury Tales* cannot know even that. Our age's interpretations of old books must always be tried and tested against the culture and icons of their age. Professor Kolve does not simply recognize the medieval integrity and vividness of Chaucerian narrative - he celebrates it. The results are salutary and satisfying.

Great, who on the death of her husband ruled Mercia, building fortifications, directing armies, arking terror into the hearts of the Vikings and master-minding an alliance of rulers in the North of England. In addition to the exercise of political authority, queens enjoyed responsibilities of great importance within the royal family, whether in the role of counsellor in the bedchamber or as the mother of the next generation; these both made them a power in the land and also laid them open to attack from enemies and rivals within and outside the court. Historical development is not evolution, and the strength and influence of royal women took a turn after the period covered by this book so as to give them different, less extensive opportunities in economic, political, military and religious affairs. Eleanor of Aquitaine, for instance, could and did work havoc within the court and her family, but as heiress of Aquitaine she had no power whatsoever.

In 200 pages, Dr Stafford has presented information and comment on it about queens at various stages of their careers. What is most lacking is quotation from the sources, of which there is virtually none; this would have given a dimension to the comment provided, and also enabled readers to form their own opinions about some of the material involved. It is nevertheless a serious work of scholarship in a neglected area.

Powers beside the throne

Benedicta Ward

PAULINE STAFFORD
Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The king's wife in the early Middle Ages
248pp. Baisford. £14.95.
07134 43995

Queens, Concubines and Dowagers is a study of the bedfellows of royalty from about 500 AD to the mid-eleventh century, in France, Italy and England. After indicating the sources used (mainly the comments of chroniclers and some descriptions by contemporaries) Pauline Stafford discusses the royal ladies she has selected, at various stages of their lives rather than in turn by dynasty. Thus, there is a chapter on the choice of a bride; on the marriage and remarriage of kings; on the status, power and activity of queens regnant; and finally one on their retirement as widows and dowagers. There is also consideration of those women who were queens in their own right and of their consorts. This method of procedure, in which no one person is discussed consecutively, seems at first frustrating, but in fact serves the useful purpose of constantly reminding the reader that the materials are lacking for any sustained biography of the ladies in question. There are unfor-

tunately no footnotes in the book, though a bibliography, some bibliographical notes and several genealogical trees, maps and an index provide some information for those who wish to read further.

The sources for such a study are limited, aporadic and difficult to assess. In particular, the accounts written by contemporaries or near contemporaries of those royal ladies who were renowned for sanctity contain all the problems involved in hagiography as distinct from biography, a distinction of which Dr Stafford is perhaps not sufficiently aware. A further drawback in dealing with such material is the modern desire to find anti-feminism lurking in every source, but this is a trap into which Stafford falls very rarely. Her account of the queens of the North of Europe in the early Middle Ages is a valuable contribution to historical studies and provides a lively view of the past from a neglected perspective.

What stands out most of all in this practical presentation of the alliances, treaties, wars, economic necessities that made up a marriage, is the formidable influence exercised by the queens, from the Empress Theophanu who controlled vast territories at the end of the tenth century, making war, receiving ambassadors, appointing bishops and generally wielding powers matched by few of her contemporaries, to Aethelflaed, daughter of Alfred the

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Arthur Terry

FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA
Selected Letters
Edited by David Gershator
172pp. Marion Boyars. £10.95.
0714528129

Lorca's reputation among English-speaking readers, though apparently as high as ever, has often been put at risk by indifferent translations and by lack of knowledge of the literary context in which his extraordinary talents were exercised. Good English versions of his poems and plays, unfortunately, are still rare; by now, however, even readers outside his own country are coming to recognize that Lorca, far from being an isolated figure, was one of a group of outstanding poets, including Guillén, Cernuda, Alberti and Alexandre, whose work marks one of the most brilliant phases in modern Spanish literature.

One of the merits of this selection of Lorca's letters lies in the vivid glimpses it offers of this general atmosphere of literary and artistic activity. From a biographical point of view, there is a certain fascination in watching the immature, and at times self-indulgent, Lorca of the early letters give way to the intensely practical, though less visionary, writer of the 1920s and early 30s: helping to found literary magazines, collaborating with Falla and Dalí, lecturing and reciting his own verse, and eventually becoming immersed in the technicalities and day-to-day strains of theatre production. In all this, the strength of Lorca's personality and his magnetic effect on the people he knew are very evident; at the same time, what might have remained passing enthusiasms are transformed into serious artistic endeavour by his willingness to learn from other examples of excellence. Thus his own abilities as an amateur musician and devotee of Spanish folk-song were sharpened by contact with the austere genius of Falla, whose continued presence in Granada ensured that Lorca's musical experience was anything but provincial. Such an influence, like that of Dalí on Lorca's drawings, ultimately feeds into the literary work, to which the letters form a useful, and at times illuminating, adjunct.

Here again, one is struck by Lorca's openness to other poetry, both past and present. As several of the letters make clear, Lorca's intuitiveness, which is often taken to be the mark of a "popular", "spontaneous" temperament, goes with a persistence and a power of empathy which account for the sheer intelligence of his reading of other poets. The outstanding example of this is his splendid lecture on one of his own masters, the seventeenth-century poet Luis de Góngora, originally delivered in 1927; another, less spectacular though equally telling, is his perceptive response to the early poems of Jorge Guillén, whose clarity and emotional power he defends against those critics who had found them over-cerebral.

Glass

He kept on dropping things. While I was there
He dropped two glasses, one bottle, tripped over my bag.
Each time a nervous smile, a slight sag
Of the shoulders, a vague look into the wild air,
Then out would come the broom. Behind the bar
The glasses trembled,
The glasses shimmered,
The place resembled
A jeweller's window, the muscular
And nervous delicacy of the timid.

To be so clumsy was embarrassing.
He looked down frequently for crumbs of glass.
And went on serving in that curious
Unsteady way of his, a wretched thing;
Enormous eared and flitted. Behind the bar
The glasses trembled,
And dissembled
In the honey-
Coloured light, displaying the muscular
And nervous delicacy of money.

GEORGES SZIRTES

The 118 letters included in this selection – the more substantial part of Lorca's published correspondence – run from 1918, when Lorca was barely twenty, to his premature death in 1936. Almost half of them date from 1926–28 – the years of the composition and publication of *Romancero gitano* and of the production of his first full-length play, *Murieta Phedra* – though several of the most interesting were written during the visit to the United States (1929–30) which was to culminate in his finest collection of poems, *Poeta en Nueva York*. Many of these letters, especially those to his fellow-poet Guillén, contain examples of work in progress, sometimes significantly different from the published versions, together with explanations and statements of intention. Some of these, like his reaction to the success of *Romancero gitano* –



"The gypsies are a theme. And nothing more. I could just as well be a poet of sewing needles and hydraulic landscapes" – have been quoted over and over again by Lorca critics, often with little understanding of their context. To read them as they occur in the course of the letters, however, and with due regard for the nature of the particular recipient, is to realize the extent to which the whole correspondence represents an attempt to create a convincing poetic identity, or rather, a sense of personal identity from which the necessary poems might follow.

For those who know and admire Lorca's work in the original, the growing complexity of this process, from the vaguely Maeterlinckian concept of "the poet" expressed in early letters to the more serious doubts which precede the composition of the New York poems, will seem a sufficient source of interest. Less practised readers, however, may feel that these letters scarcely fulfil the expectations aroused by the

blurb, which places them in the company of those of Keats and Henry Crunne. It is no reflection on Lorca to say that his letters show little of the relentless self-searching of Crunne or of the heroic quest for spiritual and moral health which underlies the profound humanity of Keats's Romantic vision. What they have in abundance, however, is a sense of drama which enacts itself at the most elemental level and which reaches ultimately to the roots of the Spanish language itself. As one of Lorca's best critics, Derek Harris, has observed: "Lorca was a poet of singular intensity focused simply on a narrow range of themes. His work is a cockpit for a struggle between life and death, love and sterility." As Harris also remarks, it is the unequal nature of this struggle which makes Lorca a tragic poet, and one of the virtues of the letters is that they allow us to see him in the act of cutting through the finis and pretentiousness of inferior kinds of poetry in order to make himself more vulnerable to the demands of his tragic vision. Or as he writes in a letter to Guillén (September 9, 1926):

The eternal and congenial site of true poetry is love, effort and renunciation. . . . When poetry is filled with trumpets and garlands it turns the academy into a counting house. I can only tell you that I hate the organ, the lyre and the flute. I love the human voice. The solitary human voice impoverished by love and removed from landscapes than kill. The voice must detach itself from the harmonies of things and from the concert of nature in order that its single note may flow.

Though the point Lorca is making here is of great importance for his own poetry, it is hard to imagine an English or American poet speaking quite like this. Often, to be sure, his prose offers the same kind of difficulties to the translator as his poetry. Time after time in the letters he seems to be trying out images which might eventually find their place in a poem: "I'm in the country enjoying Nature and listening to the immortal crickets sharpening their little gold blades". Nevertheless, this is the kind of image one has come to expect from Lorca, and any sense of strain in the language is likely to be offset by the thought that a poet writing in English could well use a similar

At the same time, it would be unfair to dismiss this excellently produced volume as an example of misplaced industry; on the contrary, the picture it gives of Lorca, for all its inevitable shortcomings of the prose, is both accurate and compelling, and if it persuades anyone to learn Spanish in order to encounter this remarkable poet in his own language, it will have performed an excellent service.

Writing as spirituality

J. M. Cocking

STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ
Correspondence: Novembre 1897–Septembre 1898

Edited by Henri Mondor and Lloyd James Austin
353pp. Paris: Gallimard. 195fr.
2070701666

"I'm working a bit," Mallarmé told Veléry in June 1898, "but mostly at the business of growing old." He was then only fifty-six, but he was to die suddenly in the following September, still trying to write the long-promised last sections of *Hérodiade*. He had at last about this task in May, painfully aware of the difficulty of reaching back to the imaginative aura of a poem begun in 1864. "Don't tell anybody I'm working at it," he wrote to his daughter, "it might get round to Volard, and he thinks I've finished it." It had been promised to Deman for a *Poésies complètes*, constantly deferred; now it was promised to Ambroise Vollard, who specialized in luxurious illustrated editions. Vollard intended to produce *Un coup de dés*, with lithographs by Odilon Redon, and *Hérodiade*, illustrated by Vuillard. The *Coup de dés* reached the proof stage, but according to Volard's memoirs the printer, Didot, eventually threw his hand because he thought the text was the work of a madman. The *Hérodiade* project never got off the ground, for the very good reason that the poem was never finished. After Mallarmé's death Vollard was not above the incomplete drafts, but they were edited by Gardner Davies in 1959.

The more intimate letters of these last months of Mallarmé's life suggest weariness and discouragement, even in the poet's allusions to his familiar pleasures. The garden at Valvins is costing too much in money and effort; his ageing cat Lith has fallen into dirty habits; there are fewer neighbours and fewer visits from the friends Mallarmé would most

ingine, however much the actual working might differ.

The real problem concerns more sustained passages of prose, like the one quoted above. It needs to be said at this point that the present du better, and that his version is, for the most part, thoroughly reliable. Yet, even allowing for the idiosyncrasies of Lorca's way of writing, one is forced, as so often, to conclude that certain forms of expression which are convincing and natural in Spanish have no possible counterpart in contemporary English. It is difficult to say why this should be so, though one possible line of argument has recently been suggested by Donald Davie in discussing the essays of Geoffrey Hill (*London Review of Books*, June 21, 1984). Reflecting on the claim that "language cannot be innocent", Davie argues that this may be truer of some languages than of others. If British English by now is "knowing", or even "deproved", as Hill's own practice seems to imply, the area available to authentic poetry in that language is inevitably constricted. Yet, as Davie goes on to say, if British English "cannot be in this sense 'innocent', that doesn't necessarily hold true of other languages (Russian, Mexican Spanish, American English, and so on) – a possibility which at once raises perhaps insoluble problems for translators. . . . The argument is clearly an important one, though its full implications go far beyond the scope of a short review. Even in its bare essentials, however, it serves to confirm one's feeling that even the best translations of Lorca – or, for that matter, of other modern Spanish and Latin American poets – are bound to seem unsatisfactory.

At the same time, it would be unfair to dismiss this excellently produced volume as an example of misplaced industry; on the contrary, the picture it gives of Lorca, for all its inevitable shortcomings of the prose, is both accurate and compelling, and if it persuades anyone to learn Spanish in order to encounter this remarkable poet in his own language, it will have performed an excellent service.

like to see. In the days when he used to escape from Paris for comparatively short summers, Valvins meant freedom and a place to dream in. Now that he stays from May to November, some of the magic has gone; he writes to Léopold Doulphin that Valvins has become just the place where he lives. Even the sailing boat is neglected. Vollard's advance of 200 francs starts a gentle and mostly playful tug-of-war between Mallarmé and his daughter, each quoting details of household expenses. Valvins or Paris; money is tight.

In August Mallarmé wrote terse answers to a questionnaire sent to well-known writers for a feature in *Le Figaro*. What was his ideal? Twenty? To write. Had he achieved it? Only must judge; "suffisamment, je me l'ai dit, pour que mon humble vie gardât un sens." A last hint of what Mallarmé meant by "writing" is in the letter he sent to acknowledge a translation of excerpts from Tolstoy's *What is Art*. The latter had been reported as saying that he found Mallarmé's poems quite meaningless. Mallarmé's own aesthetic creed is still firm, and firmly distinguished from Tolstoy's: "L'instinct religieux reste un moyen offert à tous de se passer de l'Art, il le contient à l'état embryonnaire et l'Art n'en est que le développement de cette influence."

The upholding of this particular faith in the spirituality of literature was what Mallarmé saw as the meaning of his own life. Others have given his life and work other meanings: as writer or theorist of literature of his century provided anything like his stimulus to writers and theorists since his day. And one does find a volume of letters with a still vivid impression of the qualities that made Mallarmé the man so widely loved. One further volume will include about a hundred letters that have turned up since the present volume was put together in 1979, a general index and a chronological table of the complete correspondence. After which Professor Austin will perhaps have more time to enjoy the tributes he has earned by his own faithfulness to an exacting purpose.

Chemical complexities, physical simplicities

Jorge Calado

ALEXANDER TODD
A Time to Remember: The autobiography of a chemist
257pp. Cambridge University Press. £15.
0521255937
GUY HARTCUP and T. E. ALLIBONE
Cockcroft and the Atom
320pp. Bristol: Adam Hilger. £18.95.
0852747594

If scientific research is the "art of the soluble", then physics concerns itself with the exact workings of simple systems, and chemistry with a more approximate description of complexity. Working on a simple, usually small system (as in physics) does not guarantee that the problem remains simple, but it usually means that mathematics can be successfully applied to it. On the other hand, chemistry aims at creating a maximum degree of order with a minimum of mathematics. Hence the romantic appeal of chemistry, as opposed to the dry rationality of physics.

As a member of the legendary Rutherford team at the Cavendish in Cambridge, John Cockcroft succeeded, in 1932 (with Ernest Walton), in artificially splitting a small atom, lithium. At about the same time, in Oxford, Alexander Todd discovered, by chance, how to make 2-beta-tetra-acetyl-D-glucopyranosyl-phosphoglucoalddehyde, an essential step towards the synthesis of flower pigments. Cockcroft was, of course, a physicist, and Todd a chemist (and an organic chemist at that). These two new biographies provide some fascinating contrasts not only between the two sciences, but also between their subjects and the literary genre of biography.

The two experiments mentioned above demonstrate some of the differences that separate physics from chemistry. One is dimensional (from the smallness of a nucleus to the vastness of an organic macromolecule) and the other is energetic (the energy necessary to smash the atom is several orders of magnitude higher than that involved in the breaking up of a molecule). Energy is expensive, and high-energy physics is big science in both size and cost. It was Cockcroft who finally convinced Rutherford of the need to build the big accelerators at the Cavendish (Rutherford's reluctance was mainly due to the fact that they didn't originate there) and this biography dutifully includes the famous picture of the Cockcroft-Walton accelerator, with Walton squeezed in an almost foetal position in the womb-like cabin of the machine. (No wonder Cockcroft's mother, congratulating him on his appointment as Junior Bursar of St John's, hoped that the new responsibilities would take him "into the fresh air more instead of that dirty, stuffy, sunless lab" of his.)

The big accelerators became the emblem of the new physics, stimulated the imagination of the common man and inspired the design of films such as *Things to Come* (1936), based on Wells's novel. In a joint article written for *The Times* in 1933, Rutherford and Cockcroft could say:

Thirty years ago the most important researches in the Cavendish were carried out with sealing wax, glass and wire; a glimpse of the heavy electric machinery, compressors, high voltage apparatus and elaborate electrical recording instruments which form part of the new Cavendish and its new offspring is sufficient to show how far we have moved from those days of simplicity.

High-energy physics has never ceased to get bigger, with the machines housed in huge subterranean, Piranesi-like cathedrals. The latest one, called LEP, now being built near the Franco-Swiss border by CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research), with which Cockcroft was also associated, has a perimeter of twenty-seven kilometres.

Lord Todd's domain of research has been cosier but no less revolutionary. As an organic chemist he held to Berzelius's definition of his subject as the chemistry of substances found in living matter, rather than the more encyclopaedic one, derived from Gmelin, as the chemistry of the carbon compounds. Early in his career he was thrown, almost by chance, into the vitamin field, by working with George Barger at Edinburgh. He then moved to the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine in London to

take up a Readership in Biochemistry, and there he continued his research on vitamins B1 and E and started work on the active principle of cannabis (with the result that he had to submit twenty-five reprints of each paper to the Bureau of Drugs and Indecent Publications). In 1938, at the age of thirty, he became Sir Samuel Hall Professor of Chemistry and Director of the Chemical Laboratories of the University of Manchester. Six years later he finally took the organic chemistry chair in Cambridge (after having rejected biochemistry) and assumed complete authority, as head of department, to organize and develop the University Chemical Laboratory. (As he writes elsewhere, responsibility without power never appealed to him.) He took his right-hand man from Manchester, A. R. Gilson, to Cambridge to act as Laboratory Superintendent in charge of all non-academic affairs. "Between us I like to think that we put, in turn, Manchester and Cambridge on the scientific map." This is a bit of an overstatement. Not only does it overlook the outstanding work of other scientists, even chemists, in both universities, but it is doubtful that if Manchester and Cambridge were not already on the scientific map Todd would have agreed to go there in the first place.

The chemistry of vitamins – how they work and why they are important – lies at the centre of his research. The work on co-enzymes included the synthesis of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the substance which is involved in phosphate transfer and acts as the necessary reservoir of energy for, among others, muscular activity in animals. His research on nucleosides and nucleotides led to the setting-up of the general structure of the nucleic acids – "the base on which molecular biology and modern genetics have developed in such spectacular fashion during the past quarter of a century". By looking at some fundamental chemical processes occurring in living matter Professor Todd has been responsible, more, perhaps, than anyone else, for lifting Biochemistry from the state of muck chemistry to which the aphorism "Tierechemie ist Schmierchemie" had confined it. Such a distinguished career has been honoured by a Nobel Prize, the Presidencies of the Royal Society and IUPAC (the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry), a place in the House of Lords, the Order of Merit, etc.

In an attempt to make life easier for future historians of science, Todd has now written his autobiography, *A Time to Remember*. Sir John Cockcroft, who was ten years Todd's senior, had a similarly celebrated life, but did not live to write his own memoirs. The present biography, *Cockcroft and the Atom*, written with the full co-operation of Lady Cockcroft, is a joint effort by Professor T. E. Allibone, a former colleague of Cockcroft, and Guy Hartcup, the historian of military science. This is the more readable and illuminating of the two books.

One of the problems of *A Time to Remember* resides in the ambiguity of its potential readership. It is far too technical to aim for the general public and it is too short of detail to interest the specialist, who is constantly referred to the chemical literature for further information. There is, alas, more excitement in a single scientific paper of Todd's than in the whole of this book. Occasionally it flickers to life, for example, whenever R. B. Woodward ("one of those very rare people who possessed that elusive quality of genius, and was certainly the greatest organic chemist of his generation, and possibly of this century") enters the scene. I wish there were more about him. The best part of the book comes in the six appendices which reprint in extract form the five Anniversary Addresses to the Royal Society and the Presidential Address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science. There is precious little insight into the workings of a great mind. We are told that Todd has been everywhere, from Brazil to Malaysia (where he endured tropical storms and narrowly escaped being annihilated by bandits) and Australia, from Nkrumah's Ghana to Venezuela, but he is predictable in a condescending and aloof British way in his comments about the natives. Moscow was "drah and with a rather oppressive atmosphere". In India he saw "poverty", cheek by jowl with "fantastic riches" and found "comical the girl students riding bicycles in their Islamic garb; Trinidad

disks laugh a lot and in Papua-New Guinea people still go about stripped down to their blue, white and red paint; the Spain of Franco was inevitably a banana monarchy of tin soldiers. On meeting Indira Gandhi at her father's house in 1953 he found her very impressive and "from that day onwards [he] never had much doubt about who would succeed Nehru when the time came". It is, thus, hard to believe that his foresight did not seem to apply to his own successes – a mere two months before winning the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1957, when toasted at Berkeley by Wendell Stanley and told to remember the toast in December (when the Nobel Prizes are announced) he confesses that he had not a clue of what it meant. The Presidency of the Royal Society also, he claims, came to him as a complete surprise.

Cockcroft also travelled everywhere, but his trips were embellished by aesthetic pleasures: stopping in Beirut, on the way to Australia, to see Baalbek, foregoing some official opening in Italy to make a detour to Ravenna, with Fermi, to admire the Byzantine relics, gazing in wonderment at the Taj Mahal ("I could have stayed and looked at it indefinitely – the beauty was in the exterior and in the setting"). He loved to poke around old buildings and had a deep appreciation of architecture. It is thus no coincidence that he spent the best of his life creating new institutions or looking after old ones, since they both allowed him to indulge in his passion for building. As Junior Bursar of St John's he delighted in the opportunity to restore the old buildings or construct new additions to the College. Later, during the War, he became the prime force behind Chalk River, the Canadian laboratory for the production of plutonium in a reactor. When Britain finally decided to become a nuclear power, Cockcroft was invited, by common consent of his peers, to take charge of research and development: "The Atomic Energy Research Establishment (AERE) at Harwell, and its offsprings were the result."

For Sir Nevill Mott, Cockcroft's greatest achievement and real claim to fame lay not in the fundamental research in the 1930s (for which he was awarded, jointly with Walton, the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1951) but in the development and utilization of atomic energy. Despite his reserve and shyness, his habit of sitting silent through meetings, he was a very efficient organizer and usually got things done very quickly. Supporting Cockcroft's nomination for the directorship of the atomic energy programme, Chadwick (the discoverer of the neutron) could write: "his temper is so equable and his patience and persistence so inexhaustible that we can put in lively and relatively irresponsible men who have the real feeling for research without fear of upsetting the balance." He made the AERE, as he had made Chalk River before that, a bappy organization. Soon he was the subject of affectionate cartoons and was dubbed the "atom-chief" in the popular press. To many he also became a living symbol of international scientific co-operation, drawing applause, despite his conservative views and outlook, from some unexpected quarters, such as the *Daily Worker*: "Whatever magnificent developments are seen in the next ten years, whatever contribution Britain and her scientists are able to make to the world pool of knowledge and skill, a large share of the credit must go to this calm and unassuming man. . . . He is neither the dome-headed 'mad scientist' of Edwardian fiction, nor the power obsessed 'new man' of recent fiction." Cockcroft and the Atom, besides giving us a very vivid and sympathetic portrait of the man, reads also as a good short history of nuclear energy in Britain (inevitably drawing generously from Margaret Gowing's *Independence and Deterrence, British and Atomic Energy 1945-1952*).

Cockcroft's involvement in Britain's nuclear programme robbed him of the opportunity of pursuing a university career (he held, during 1939-46, the Jacksonian Professorship of Natural Philosophy, but "delivered not a single lecture, a record probably unequalled even by the 18th century professors", as he himself acknowledged). Todd, despite an active engagement in science politics (at one time he almost became Minister of State for Science under Douglas Home) always remained an academic. The crucial role played by science during the

war led the politicians to believe that it could be equally valuable in peace, and thus two advisory bodies were created, both chaired by Sir Henry Tizard – the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy (ACSP) to look at civil science and technology, and the Defence Research Policy Committee (DRPC) to deal with defence matters. On Tizard's retirement in 1952, Cockcroft succeeded him as chairman of DRPC and Todd as chairman of ACSP (on whose Council Cockcroft also sat). Their paths would cross again. The new faith in science and technology as conveyors of "prosperity for all" meant that something had also to be done in science education. A new school, modelled on the MIT or the Continental Technische Hochschule, was envisaged. There was also a consensus that such an institution should be a national memorial to Sir Winston Churchill, who in 1949 had addressed a conference at the MIT on "The 20th Century, its Promise and its Realisation". Largely at Todd's instigation, the creation of a new Cambridge college – Churchill College – was favoured over a completely separate technological institute. It is reported in *Cockcroft and the Atom* that Churchill was "rather disappointed that the college would not resemble the MIT as closely as he would have liked and that it was to be built in Cambridge rather than Oxford". Todd had been so closely involved and done so much for the creation of the new college (even choosing its motto, "Forward") that he was the obvious candidate for the Mastership, but after the intervention of Harold Macmillan, the Trustees appointed Cockcroft, then about to retire from the Atomic Energy Authority. Cockcroft's old dream of returning to his alma mater was finally realized; Todd avoided "the hectic days following the launching of the Churchill College appeal" by going off to Singapore and Hong Kong.

Cockcroft was determined to make the new college a place "where senior and junior, science and arts, were continually mixing", thus providing a "general education for students as well as the continual re-education of Fellows". According to George Steiner, it became "a place where the arts were not only welcomed but spoilt".

One of the pleasures of *Cockcroft and the Atom* lies in the excellent selection of photographs (there are no photographs or indices in *A Time to Remember*), many of them of aesthetic merit. And what better epitaph than the *Picture Post* photograph of Sir John, striding along the Ridgeway? He is shown back to camera, silhouetted against the twilight, as if resolutely facing the undiscovered country.

Mould's Medical Anecdotes (147pp. Bristol: Adam Hilger. £9.95. 0 85274 762 4) is a collection of anecdotes, humorous or bizarre, gathered by Dick Mould in the course of his more serious work as a lecturer on behalf of the International Atomic Agency and the World Health Organization. It includes entries entitled "Ivan the Terrible's Skeleton", "The 'Deceased' Left Funeral Swearing", "Morbidly In Assistants at Surgical Operations" and "Curling Pileas with Petrol".

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Freud and Modernism

Sir, — Sir Ernst Gombrich, in his reply (July 13) to my letter of July 6, still claims that Freud's private opinion of much modern art resembled those subsequently proclaimed by Nazi theorists of degenerate art. I maintain that his interpretation is in error; and the situation is interestingly more complex than I originally thought.

Gombrich and S. S. Prawer (Letters, July 13) both refer to two letters quoted by Gombrich in *Tributes*. The letter to which Gombrich's "here of all places . . . an anticipation" refers is a letter from Freud to Abraham in respect of which Gombrich thinks that I am mistaken in seeing Freud as anything other than "angry and in deadly earnest". I take this letter, as I have said, to be a chain of jokes, the intended "victim" of which is Abraham's *amour propre*, rather than any Expressionist art or artists. ("The artist says he saw you like that" is surely a joke. Again, the invoking of Adler's theories against the artist can hardly be more than a mock condemnation, given Freud's relation to Adler at the time; "his theories . . . have very little to do with psychoanalysis, which they were designed to replace.") Abraham's reply, at any rate, is explicit: "I will have to thank you . . . for the humorous lines to which you were inspired by my portrait" (Abraham to Freud, January 1923). Admittedly, when a joke has to be pointed out, there is room for doubt, but that doubt is not about whether the letter is prescient or not to the ideas of the Third Reich.

The other letter, to which Gombrich's "here of all places" is not directly attached, and which Gombrich takes to be the milder in tone, is a letter to Pfister, and it is here that Gombrich may be closer to the truth. But first there is some clearing up to be done. Gombrich claims that Freud wrote "that these 'madmen' had no right to call themselves artists". The original letter says: "In private life I have no patience at all with fools (Narren). . . . But after all, you yourself say clearly and exhaustively what these people lack in order to be able to claim the name of artist." Now there is no doubt that Freud wanted certain people to be "artists" rather than artists, and that this applied to a whole range of people from the painter in Abraham's case (Tibany) to Hermann Bahr and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. But always Freud's criterion for such judgments was lack of artistic skill, and never mental illness or moral degeneracy. What was important for Freud in artistic work was the ability to represent conflict in such a way as to hide, and deflect attention from, its unpleasant effects. Such a concern is present in Pfister's book on Expressionism. However, in allowing this interest to dominate his reply to Pfister, Freud seems to have failed to notice, and certainly to comment on, the existence in Pfister's work of something graver. For, mixed in with Pfister's persistent applications of psychoanalysis, there are philosophical world-views that have really nothing to do with psychoanalysis, and which are quite antithetical to it — whilst being quite consistent with Nazi theories not only of art but also of society. Pfister took it that the direction of the treatment should be subordinated to ethical principles which originate externally to the psychoanalytical situation, and those perspectives which he wished to impose on psychoanalysis he attempted to develop fairly systematically into a totalitarian philosophical theory, based on religious ideals, in which weakness was to be expelled on behalf of strength. Freud had protested about Pfister's philosophy three months before the letter quoted by Gombrich was written (a protest which Pfister had found incomprehensible); so perhaps Freud thought his place said. Many of the letters from Freud to Pfister are unobtainable, but certainly by 1927 Pfister was clearly aware of the divergences between the two of them: "I cannot have things out with you on religion, since you completely reject the philosophy, your way of judging art is completely different from mine. . . . I think totally differently here" (Pfister to Freud, November 1927). Pfister is here commenting on Freud's public and private opinion of his ideals, from which followed the separation of their views on even modern art.

In detecting totalitarian tendencies, Gombrich's instincts are right; but these tendencies

are to be found in Pfister and not in Freud. By not differentiating sufficiently between the two, Gombrich has displaced on to Freud opinions that properly belong elsewhere. The conclusions that Pfister sought in philosophy led him to temper psychoanalysis with ideals — ideals that were criticized by Freud, openly and in private (mildly in 1913, but with increasing force from the mid-1920s). Professor Prawer cites Thomas Mann as believing that Freud did not misuse psychoanalysis: in fact, Mann's claim was not this at all, but — as reported by Gombrich in *Tributes* — that psychoanalysis "clearly resists" any attempt to subordinate it to reactionary purposes. Pfister was shocked by the rise of the Nazis, but his philosophy does not resist incorporation into a totalitarian world-view; psychoanalysis does, and so do Freud's opinions on art.

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'Poor Penelope'

Sir, — In his review of Sylvia Freedman's *Poor Penelope* (July 20) S. Scheenbaum writes thus of Sir Philip Sidney:

Dying at Zutphen after giving a poor soldier his only bottle, Sidney recalled the youthful vanity in which he had taken guilty delight: "It was my Lady Rich."

Two very dubious stories are here conflated. Sidney died at Arnhem nearly four weeks after being wounded at Zutphen. The story of his sharing a water bottle (not by any means necessarily his only one) with a dying soldier comes from Fulke Greville, who was not present, writing over twenty years later. The allusion to his guilty recollection of Lady Rich comes from an even more doubtful document, a pious account of Sidney's death by a clergyman, also apparently written long after the event. The allusion to Lady Rich occurs in one only of the two manuscripts, and is unlikely to reflect anything more than a posthumous legend. Scheenbaum's description of Penelope Rich as Sidney's "inamorata" suggests that even modern scholars long to believe in such legends.

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The Kensington Rune Stone

Sir, — The review by Hilda Davidson of *The Vikings in History* by E. Donald Logan (July 6) refers to "many earnest or mischievous attempts to establish the Viking presence in North America", and gives as one instance the "well-executed but now discredited forgeries of runes on the Kensington Stone".

There is a strong sentiment in Minnesota in favour of the authenticity of the Kensington Rune Stone, which was found by a Swedish-American farmer near Alexandria, Minnesota, in the late 1890s. It is true that the opinion of scholars generally, based largely on linguistic analysis, was until recently that the carvings on the stone are of modern rather than ancient origin. Also, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th Edition, says, "It has been proved to be a forgery".

The unequivocal charges of forgery are apparently based on studies reported in 1968. None of those studies, however, gave any real evidence of fraud, but reported the opinions of the investigators, premised on their assumptions about the language of the runic carvings. A report of a study published in 1982 by Robert A. Hall Jr., Professor Emeritus, Cornell University, a specialist in Romance and general linguistics, presents a good case for the authenticity of the carvings. (*The Kensington Rune Stone Is Genuine*, Hornbeam Press, Columbia, South Carolina 29206). Professor Hall also concentrated on the linguistic aspects of the stone. He considers his conclusion highly probable, but, like previous investigators, he does not claim absolute proof for it.

It is incorrect to say that the beleaguered Kensington Rune Stone has been "proved to be a forgery".

GLENN CRITTON

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The introduction to the new edition of *Lemprière's Classical Dictionary* was written by R. F. Willetts, not Roy Willetts, as stated in our issue of July 13.

Editing Yeats

Sir, — Warwick Gould's review of *The Poems of W. B. Yeats: A New Edition and Editing Yeats's Poems* (June 29) is correct on the following matters. As Denis Donoghue first noted (*THES*, June 8), "the" was omitted from the first line of "A Bronze Head" — correctly "at right of the entrance" — though I do not know how Gould can call such an error "hubristic". The other textual misprint cited by Donoghue in his letter (July 20) was first called to my attention by George Bornstein: in "Sixteen Dead Men", the proper reading is "is their logic". As Gould suggests, the missing portion of "The Living Beauty", discovered by Christopher Ricks (*Sunday Times*, May 20), appears correctly in the American edition, published several months earlier than the English. I have been informed by Macmillan, London, that they are inserting cancel pages for that mistake and two other printer's errors unique to the English edition (in "The Tower", noted by Donoghue, and in "The Wanderings of Oisín"). Gould offers a better source for the story "Hudden, Dudden and Donald O'Neary", and he has uncovered why Mrs Yeats and Thomas Mark discussed a deleted "guat" in "A Nativity". His complaint that I once misquote Mrs Yeats is valid: her "POEMS" was rendered "Poems". And his discovery of "A note (and a wrong one)" apparently refers to a transposition of Decius' death date from 251 to 215.

I am afraid, however, that apart from these addenda Gould's review is plagued by misstatements, distortions of what I wrote, and factual errors. As my space is limited, let me offer just three examples:

1. He writes that "Following a hunch, Finerman prints some refrains in italics and some in Roman . . .". My "hunch" was in fact Yeats's final typescripts for the poems in question, many of which he dated and marked "correct".

2. Commenting on the inclusion of play lyrics in the Additional Poems, he calls my statement that "Yeats does not seem to have formulated a consistent policy on the matter" "incomprehensibly false". The prior sentences in *Editing Yeats's Poems* noted that Yeats regularly published such songs as separate poems, either in a journal or in a collection of verse, with only a few of these surviving through the *Collected Poems*. As an example I cited — and cite again — "The Well and the Tree", from *At the Hawk's Well*, printed only in the 1916 *Responsibilities*.

3. He has it that "Mrs Yeats tried to preserve the integrity of 'New Poems' and 'Last Poems' by including 'Three Songs to the Same Tune' in

one and 'Three Marching Songs' in the other." This is simply — even incomprehensibly — wrong. "Three Songs to the Same Tune" was not included in *New Poems*, because it had been published three years earlier in *A Hagg Moon in March*; nor is there evidence that Yeats wanted it there. In Gould's present text, *Poems* (1949), it appears in "From 'A Hagg Moon in March'". Moreover, Yeats clearly regarded "Three Marching Songs" as a replacement for the earlier poem: in his copy of *A Hagg Moon in March* he not only heavily revised the ink "Three Snugs to the Same Tune" but also drafted a note explaining that "I published a first confused version of these songs some years ago. I hope they are now clear and perhaps singable." All of this is explained in *Editing Yeats's Poems*.

It would be easy enough, I regret to say, to continue in this vein. Readers interested in further detail need only consult my arguments in *Editing Yeats's Poems* with Gould's presentation of them. I turn now to the dominant motif of his argument, the order of the poems. Gould calls the 1933 *Collected Poems* a "stop-gap venture" and a "pot-boiler", terms which might surprise both Yeats and his publishers: the volume was reissued five times in Yeats's lifetime. Moreover, in a conversation on June 22, 1937, Yeats and Harold Macmillan decided on an expanded edition "in about two years' time". Gould believes that Yeats agreed to the plan of that volume only for potential profit; that, in other words, he had no qualms about offering his life's work to the largest possible audience in an inferior arrangement. Although he admits that Yeats's acceptance of that he met was "unambiguous" (Yeats wrote "I am delighted with your suggestion to put long poems in a section at the end"), Gould says how knows that Yeats "[n]ever thought of attending this decision" to the Edition de Luxe.

He dismisses the Scribner Edition by calling it an "American collectors' edition". Yet he also calls the Edition de Luxe an "English collectors' edition"? In 1936 Scribner's planned to sell 79 sets at \$70-80 for seven or eight volumes; in 1939 Macmillan advertised 350 sets at 10 guineas for eleven volumes. Both editions were to include Yeats's major works. On November 9, 1936, Yeats told his agent that "the list of contents I propose to send to Scribner is exactly the same as that which I have sent to Messrs. Macmillan, though slightly different in form", "form" doubtless referring to the fact that Macmillan already had much of the material in proof whereas Scribner's did not. In a letter of October 13, 1937, Yeats asked Macmillan "to delay Vol IV of Edition de Luxe until I can get proofs of the similar edition

Scribner is printing in America". Indeed, had the two editions been published at approximately the same time, the American would have seemed the more "canonical", as Yeats wrote for it alone three important essays, including an "Introduction" (published after his death as "A General Introduction for my Work").

Gould further argues against the Scribner Edition because Harold Macmillan suggested it should follow the *Collected Poems* and refused to let Scribner's have proofs of the Edition de Luxe. But even in the passage that he quotes, Macmillan reminds Yeats that the *Collected Poems* contains "the latest text". He does not quote Macmillan's statement that they will withhold the proofs only "if Mr. Yeats does not mind" or his concern to know Yeats's views. Since the Edition de Luxe had then languished for six years, if Yeats had insisted on having proofs sent to Scribner's, it is likely that Macmillan would have complied.

Furthermore, there was nothing to prevent Yeats from telling Scribner's to print his poems in any order he preferred. In discrediting the Scribner Edition, Gould again falls into misstatement. He writes, "After Yeats's death the Dublin Edition poems were provisionally re-ordered into chronological arrangement, probably at Mrs Yeats's initiative." Should Gould study the original materials in the Scribner Archive in Austin, he will discover this is not true. He complains that "Finerman remarks that these Texas materials support his view that Yeats preferred the CP ordering but offers no evidence, and there are no 'directions for arrangement' in the archive". My remark about the "Texas materials" was made in the same paragraph of *The Poems* in which I explained that the Scribner Archive had become accessible too late for citation in *Editing Yeats's Poems* and referred interested readers to essay forthcoming in the 1984 issue of the Cornell University Press *Yeats: An annual of critical and textual studies* (not to be confused with the Macmillan, London, *Yeats Annual*). Had Gould requested an advance copy, he would have had his evidence. His phrase "directions for arrangement" apparently comes from some preliminary notes on the Archive that I sent him and other interested parties in May 1983 (though I had not authorized quotation from them). However, there is incontrovertible evidence at Texas and elsewhere that Scribner's were following Yeats's instructions in using the order of the *Collected Poems*.

Yeats had every reason to believe that the Scribner Edition would be published in the spring of 1938. Would he then have allowed Macmillan to print his poems in a different arrangement before his death in 1939? Gould doubtless thinks so, because in his limited vision only the Edition de Luxe is "canonical". In so arguing he relies heavily on Mrs Yeats's preference for the Edition de Luxe format. Now although I object in the strongest possible way to his suggestion that I hold Mrs Yeats in "ill-concealed contempt", I do think it is possible to question her authority in textual matters, particularly given the following facts: 1) on April 13, 1939, she suggested an extra volume for the Edition de Luxe, to include many items which Yeats had not selected for publication therein; 2) on April 17, 1939, she wrote that she did not know what to do about "Three Songs to the Same Tune" until she had consulted with "various poets"; 3) on June 4, 1939, she agreed to Mark's suggestion to rearrange *Last Poems*; "Certainly put 'Under Ben Bulbin' at the end of the volume. Its present position was 'WB's', but I think now it should undoubtedly be at the end as you suggest"; 4) on June 22, 1939, she admitted uncertainty about "The Chóloé" and suggested it be printed both as a separate poem and as the seventh stanza of "Coolin and Ballylee, 1931"; 5) some time after 1949 she assured several scholars, including Russell K. Alsop, co-editor of *Voluntary Poems*, that *Poems* (1949) was correctly arranged, though she can hardly have forgotten the reordering of *Last Poems*; 6) in 1956 she informed Hugh Kanner that *Last Poems* was not in the proper order. Given this record, one cannot simply assume that she was following Yeats's wishes in ordering the 1949 *Poems*. The documentary evidence suggests otherwise.

The essential facts are these: 1) the most comprehensive edition of Yeats's poetry pub-

lished in his lifetime is divided into "Lyrical" and "Narrative and Dramatic"; 2) the only recorded statement by Yeats on the topic expresses "delight" with that arrangement; 3) the most comprehensive edition of his verse planned by Yeats for which he submitted copy uses the *Collected Poems* format. To prefer the opinions of Mrs Yeats and others over these demonstrable facts is not sound editorial procedure.

Throughout his review, Gould expresses misgivings about the editorial policy for the *Collected Edition of the Works of W. B. Yeats*. Years ago he pressed the same arguments upon the general editors, George Mills Harper and myself. He did not convince us then; nor has he convinced us now. Yet he continues under our direction to edit a volume in the series and to have a one-third share in another. One can therefore only wonder where his commitment to the editorial principles outlined in his review begins, and where it ends.

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Dating 'The Shrew'

Sir, — I was interested to see (Letters, July 20) how the general editor of the Oxford Shakespeare has dated *Othello* by some six months, between the limits of October 1603 and November 1604. By the same method of termini endorsed by modern scholarship (here, the Cambridge Beaumont and Fletcher, vols iv and v) we can redate *The Taming of the Shrew* by over twelve years, to the same period.

That play has a *terminus ad quem* in 1609, the date of its first known mention. It also provoked a reply called *The Woman's Prize or The Tamer Tamed* by John Fletcher (b 1579) and "composed early in his career" (op cit, iv, 1979, p3), though not earlier than 1605 ("siege of Ostend", l.iii). *The Shrew's terminus a quo* is its description (Ind.1.80f) of a play in which Soto, a farmer's eldest son, woos a gentlewoman. This, if it was not Fletcher's *Woman Pleas'd* "as we have it, was clearly another version of it" (v, 1982, p444). But no version could well be earlier than c1603, on current Fletcher chronology. So these termini, and their links between Shakespeare and his future collaborator, and common-sense inference about topicality, all propose c1604 for *The Shrew*; and so does the Cambridge editor of *Women Pleas'd* (loc cit).

This completely contradicts most modern editions of *The Shrew*, including both Oxford and Cambridge. They opt for 1593 or even earlier. For that period, however, they offer no such dating evidence, and indeed no hard evidence at all.

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Andrew Marvell

Sir, — David Nokes's review (June 1) of my edition of Andrew Marvell's *Complete Poetry* expresses surprise that despite the publication of 324 books and articles on Marvell in the decade that followed its first appearance in 1968 I have made no textual revisions. Except for a note in the Dent edition acknowledging the continuing disagreements about the authenticity of the second and third "Advices to a Painter", and persuasive claims to the canonicity of "Tom May's Death", I have changed nothing in the text but a few misprints. As Mr Nokes says, "Apparently those 300 works of scholarship failed to provide [Dent] with a single conclusive reason for altering a word or a date."

Even a cursory glance at Dan S. Collins's informative, thorough and diligently fair *Andrew Marvell: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981), which lists year by year and describes in detail everything published on Marvell between 1641 and 1978 (and referred to in my bibliographical note), might have greatly reduced Nokes's surprise. According to Collins, there are 804 books and articles on Marvell — and eighty-eight dissertations. Of these 892 items, more than a third of which appeared in the decade 1968-78, very few even touch on questions of canon and text. In the decade we are considering only seven of the 324 books and articles are concerned with textual issues: nor, I might add, do any of the

dissertations deal with such concerns.

The seven textual items are: D585 Clayton, D640 Guffey, D675 Legouis, D686 Aboyade, D737 Atkins, D751 Edwards and D772 Patterson. (I am excluding earlier entries incorporated in these items.) Of the seven Clayton, Aboyade and Atkins are concerned with the famous *glew, hue, dew crux* in "To his Coy Mistress" and support, explicitly or implicitly, my text and textual note. Guffey's work is a concordance; Legouis's article a review disparaging (without much evidence) the authority of the Bodley MS (Eng poet d49) as used in Elizabeth Story Donne's edition; and Edwards's "New Texts of Marvell's Satires, II" an account of variant readings in MSS in the Duke of Portland's collection for which he does not attempt to claim any textual authority. (Among the poems is "Britannia and Rawleigh", certainly not by Marvell.) We are left with Annabel Patterson's *Marvell and the Civic Crown*, which argues at length for the inclusion of the second and third "Advices to a Painter" in the canon, a position I share.

The best work on Marvell is as distinguished as that on much greater English poets, yet we still may regret the deal of sack and the half-pennyworth of bread in the mesmerizing multiplication of ever-new interpretations of a half-dozen lyrics while textual research is neglected. Nevertheless, we must remember that for most of the poems there are only two witnesses, with any pretence to authority: *Miscellaneous Poems* (1681) and "Popple" (Bedley Eng poet d49). A contemporary edition must, therefore, rely on these, with additional help from the few poems published in Marvell's lifetime.

Had Warren Chernaik's challenging re-examination of editorial marks in the Bodley MS appeared before my edition was republished (*The Poet's Time*, Cambridge, 1983), I would have taken it into account. It is the first detailed study of the Popple MS and will inevitably lead to a re-examination of the canon and text of the satires.

As to Mr Nokes's comment that my "repeated praise" for Marvell's poise in presenting Cromwell and Charles I in "An Horatian Ode" reminds him of Horace Walpole's observation on "Pope's proud boast of Erasmus neutrality" as an "honest mean [that] was alternate time-serving", I can only admit that the question was and is a real one. Fifty years before Walpole Dryden was attacking Marvell as a Marprelate and Samuel Parker and others of his ilk were charging him with the shiftiness and expediency which they themselves grossly exemplified. Here I would conclude by saying that if John Klaus's *The Unfortunate Fall: Theology and the moral imagination of Andrew Marvell* (Hamden, CT: Armon Books, 1983) had appeared while the Dent edition was still in my hands, I would have taken a more discriminating approach to the moral and theological issues that may lie beneath the over-celebrated and over-commented paradoxes, ambiguities, enigmas and contradictions that have been a staple for Marvellians (myself included) for far too long.

GEORGE O'FOREST LORD
Department of English, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Dryden and the Epic

Sir, — Charles Martindale in his review of *Aspects of the Epic*, edited by Ton Winitz, Penelope Murray and K. W. Gransden (July 13), quotes Dryden on the epic: "A Heroic poem, truly such, is undoubtedly the greatest work which the son of man is capable to perform." Some fit of accuracy and pedantry overcame me as I read that. Between Dryden (first sentence of his dedication of the *Annals*) and your pages, the phrase "the Son of Man" has somehow got altered into the biblical "son of man".

It seems not to have been noticed that this is taken from René Rapin's *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poetics*, as published in the translation of the redoubtable Thomas Rymer in 1674. No doubt Dryden held the sentiment as firmly as if he had written it out to begin with, and it may well be that he was reminded of Rapin's remark by the second edition of Rymer's translation, published in London in 1694 (p77). If so, the then appropriate phrase for him would have been "A Heroic

Poem, truly such", since Sir Richard Blackmore's *Prince Arthur* had appeared in 1695, with an attack on Dryden. My own *Pedantic Reflections* go no farther than that.

EARL MINER

Department of English, Princeton University, McCosh 22, Princeton, New Jersey.

Hobbes's 'De Cive'

Sir, — In his review (July 6) of Howard Warrender's new editions of the Latin and English versions of Hobbes's *De Cive*, Blair Worden wonders about the importance of variations in the texts to other than "full-time Hobbiists". I think I have escaped from that category and so venture to offer my views.

Some of the textual variations of the English from the Latin, notably for example in the author's "Preface", are clearly mistranslations (on this point see T. Megri's Italian translation of *De Cive*, Rome, 1979). There are other oddities about the English translation. First, it was published by the Royalist publisher Richard Royant rather than by Hobbes's usual publisher, Andrew Crooke. Second, it contains three illustrative plates, one at the beginning of each section of the book, not found in any other edition. These emblematic illustrations, included in Warrender's edition for the first time since 1651, tell a story. (Their source and significance is discussed in my "Picturing Hobbes's Politics", *J. of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44 [1981], 232-37.) But unlike the frontispieces of Hobbes's other works, they tell a story different from the text. The message of these illustrations is Stuart legitimacy; Charles the martyr (complete with the mark of his beheading on his throat) appears himself in the third plate ("Religion") in an emblem of innocence, the man without sin facing worldly evils.

So it seems that Hobbes's political works were published for three different purposes between 1649 and 1651. *The Elements of Law* was put out (in two sections) in support of the Commonwealth. Hobbes's *Leviathan* came out in April 1651; Quentin Skinner has emphasized that it adopted a *de facto*, not a legitimist, position. The English version of *De Cive* had appeared a month earlier. Published by a Royalist publisher, illustrated with legitimist emblems, translated with errors, it appeared in the Stuart interest and Hobbes was probably not responsible for initiating its publication.

M. M. GOLDSMITH
Department of Politics, University of Exeter, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter.

General Browning

Sir, — Redmond O'Hanlon in his review (July 13) of Peter Dickens's *SAS, The Jungle Frontier* refers to General Browning as "ADC to Montgomery" in September 1944. For the sake of historical accuracy it should be made clear that Browning, at that date, was Deputy Commander, 1st Allied Airborne Army.

BRIAN MONTGOMERY
Army and Navy Club, London SW1.

Poetry and Rhetoric

Sir, — Anne Stevenson (Letters, July 13) appears to believe me but asks where Yeats's dictum concerning poetry and rhetoric can be found. Answer: in *Poet Anna Silevia Lunn*, published in 1918 and reprinted in *Mythologies*. Section 5 of the first part of this work ("Anima Hominis") begins as follows:

We make out of the quarrel with others rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves poetry. Unlike the rhetoricians who get a confident voice from remembering the crowd they have won or may win, we sing amid our uncertainty; and amidst even the presence of the most high beauty by the knowledge of our solitude our rhythm shudders.

As Anne Stevenson seems to be suggesting, self and others are not easily distinct opposites, and indeed Yeats's mellifluous illusionism is itself a rhetorical performance which invites the reader to connive at its assumption of complete authority. "We sing amid our uncertainty" admits to no uncertainty. Yeats's ring of confidence is a closed circuit. That is its magnificence and its limitation.

JOHN MOLE

11 Hill Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Peter Ackroyd's biography of T. S. Eliot will be published shortly.

Brian Aldiss's novels include *Hellconia Summer*, 1983.

A. M. Allchin is a canon residentiary of Canterbury Cathedral.

Rayner Banham is the author of *Scenes in America Deserta*, 1983.

Jillian Barnes's novel, *Florence's Portrait*, will be published in the autumn.

Sarah Bradford's biography, *Princess Grace*, was published earlier this year.

Jorge Calado is Professor of Physical Chemistry at Cornell University.

J. M. Cocking is Emeritus Professor at King's College, London.

Elizabeth Croft is a Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Social Studies at the Hague.

Robin Evans is a lecturer of the Architectural Association, London.

Gavio Ewart's most recent collection of poems, *Moss Little Ones*, was published last year.

Sheridan Gilley is senior lecturer in Theology at the University of Durham.

Colin Greenland is the author of *The Entropy Exhibition: Michael Moorcock and the British 'New Wave' Science Fiction*, 1983.

Keith Hanley is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Lancaster.

Richard Harris wrote on Asian affairs for *The Times* from 1950 to 1983.

Roy Harris's most recent book, *The Language Myth*, was published in 1981.

Christopher Hitchens is Washington columnist for the *Nation*.

Eric Korn is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

Ruth MacDonald is Gardner Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow.

Iain McGhie is the author of *Against Criticism*, 1982.

A. J. Minnis's *Medieval Theory of Authorship* was published last year.

Bernard O'Donoghue's collection of poems, *Razorblades and Pencils*, was published earlier this year.

Catherine Peters is a lecturer in English at Somerville College, Oxford.

Tom Phillips's version of Dante's *Inferno* was published last year in a limited edition.

Paul Quarrle is Eton College Librarian and Keeper of the College Collections.

William Scott is the author of *Terror and Repression in Revolutionary Marseilles*, 1973.

Anthony Storey's most recent book, *Jung: Selected Writings*, appeared last year.

George Squires's collection of poems, *Short Wave*, was published in 1983.

Arthur Terry is Professor of Literature at the University of Essex.

P. J. Walker's *Town, City, and Nation: England 1850-1914* was published last year.

Benedicta Ward's books include *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, 1982.

Zlatoy Zlatik's novel, *Russian Service*, was broadcast, in an adaptation, by the BBC earlier this year.

COMMENTARY

Images of intellect

Keith Walker

Samuel Johnson 1709-84
Arts Council, 105 Piccadilly, London W1

KAI KIN YUNG
Samuel Johnson 1709-84
With essays by John Wain, W. W. Robson and David Fleeman
144pp. Herbert Press. £9.95.
0906969 45 X

RICHARD INGRAMS (Editor)
Dr Johnson by Mrs Thrale: The "Anecdotes"
of Mrs Piozzi in their original form
137pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press.
£10.95.

T. F. WHARTON
Samuel Johnson and the Theme of Hope
190pp. Macmillan. £25.
0333 306333

The bicentennial exhibition *Samuel Johnson 1709-84* at the Arts Council is dominated by images of Johnson. Johnson surly, triumphant, anguished, "mentally wrestling with himself", melancholic. Never at repose with himself. In one Reynolds portrait (Johnson did not like it) Johnson is shown in concentration before the contents of a book which he holds scrupled before his eyes in a moment of terrible intensity. There are four Reynolds portraits in this exhibition (a fifth, traditionally attributed to Reynolds is here ascribed to "artist unknown"). The impressive plaster-cast of a bust by William Cumberland Cruikshank and James Hoskins gives us Johnson uncompromising in the face of death. This cast is interesting in showing Johnson's nose deeply furrowed at the bridge, a fact confirmed by Reynolds's second portrait of 1769, where Johnson's compulsive gestures, which convinced strangers that he was an idiot, are stylized for once in a moment of classic poise. The shirt is open at the neck, the head without a wig. The tortured features tell a different story. Of course being monumentally ugly may have helped, but the intellectual dominance of Johnson over his painters is nowhere better shown than in the power and reach of his portraiture in contrast with the enclosed stillness of those of his many friends. Burney, posing as master musician, Boswell, complaisant in nobleman's clothes, flanked by an owl signifying fashionable melancholy, Hester Thrale and daughter reclined in sylvan ease in Streatham Park, Thomas Percy as bishop and scholar, John Hawkesworth pausing a moment before penning further interpolations into his edition of Cook's *Voyages*. Only the self-portrait of Reynolds plugging himself into tradition by posing as Rembrandt standing beside a bust of Michelangelo gives any notion of a power equal to the representations of Johnson.

But insipidity can have its own story to tell. The portrayal of Elizabeth Porter (she was later Johnson's ageing wife Tetty) by an unknown artist belies Anna Sewall's description of her as having "a very red face, and very indifferent features", though, to be sure, this was from long afterwards.

The exhibition was initially conceived as a display of books and manuscripts. There is still a wealth of these; although the glass cases and the towering presence of the Reynolds and other paintings in the elegant exhibition room make it difficult to attend closely to Johnson's crabbied handwriting. There are manuscript copies of Johnson's here, drafts of "London" and "The Vanity of Human Wishes" which show Johnson's painstaking improvements, drafts of his *Plan of a Dictionary*, and of *The Lives of the Poets*. Of course the vast, and vastly entertaining, *Dictionary* is here, together with first editions of most of Johnson's books. Johnson's friends are commemorated in a way by copies of the many books for which he wrote prefaces, sometimes without having read the book in question.

The exhibition includes mercifully few association items, most of them connected with his life as a scholar and writer: pictures of Lichfield and Pembroke College; Johnson's diploma as an Oxford MA, and, inevitably, his silver teapot.



Johnson portrayed by Reynolds in 1775, by Opie in 1783-4, and by Cruikshank and Hoskins, incorporating a death-mask, in 1784; reproduced from Samuel Johnson 1709-84.

Samuel Johnson 1709-84, the book, is a curious hybrid. A great part of it is taken up with a catalogue of the exhibition, written with wit and gusto by its organizer Kai Kin Yung. This is prefaced by three essays by John Wain, W. W. Robson and David Fleeman. Together these essays betray some uncertainty as to the nature of the audience for which the book is intended.

Writing on "Reason, bias and faith in the mind of Johnson" Wain covers the ground dutifully, and casually. Boswell does not report Johnson as having said "I refute Berkeley thus" (does Wain think that to quote with accuracy is the most fantastical pedantry?) On this occasion accuracy matters especially, since it is not Berkeley's person, but his "ingenious sophistry" that is in question. Wain argues that Johnson usually insisted on speaking the truth except where his bias led "him into false statement". The "false statements" he instances turn out not to be "false statements" at all but matters of interpretation (signalled as such by Johnson) over Milton's character and Gray's holiday with Walpole. His way of arguing is curious. "In fact, there are scores of ways in which two people on a holiday might grate on each other's nerves." Does the *in fact* imply that this insight into the Human Condition vouchsafed to Wain was danted to Johnson?

W. W. Robson's essay on Johnson's poetry, while being free of *beliefs* of this sort, is a relaxed affair like a lecture to a summer-school. Robson is alert and intelligent, but seems unwilling to commit himself firmly. By way of contrast David Fleeman's essay on the *Dictionary* is a model of scholarly popularization, unafraid to use technical bibliographical evidence in the pursuit of an argument about how the *Dictionary* might have been written, and judiciously speculative.

Hester Thrale befriended Johnson in the last years of his life, and her marriage to an Italian musician was a grievous blow to Johnson, sig-



nalling the end of hospitality and much more. She kept a diary of sorts which she called *Thraliana*, and quarried it for her *Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson*, rushed out in 1786 two years after Johnson's death. *Thraliana* was published in its entirety by Katherine Balderston in 1942, in two bulky volumes which are now out of print. The *Anecdotes* are likewise out of print.

Richard Ingrams has had the happy and timely idea of selecting some of the anecdotes about Johnson from the larger collection, *Thraliana*, and bringing them together. The diary versions of the anecdotes are better than those given by the published *Anecdotes*, a book that is pretentious and inaccurate. Ingrams breaks Balderston's text up into paragraphs, some facetious. (One paragraph is headed "The Frogs". Frogs are mentioned, but the French are referred to.) He translates a few Latin tags. That apart, it is difficult to see what Ingrams's "editing" consists of. He makes no attempt to correct Thrale's mistakes, although the evidence is available of the foot of the pages of Balderston that he photocopies. He reprints Balderston's pages 158-215 largely unaltered, and selects the rest from the anecdotes scattered throughout *Thraliana*, though for some reason from the first volume almost wholly.

There are notes on Borelli, Ossianic Poems, Peppa, La Bollingbrooke; but not on Doctor Parker, Dr Blair, Lady Catherine Wynne, or Buckingham's Play.

"It is necessary to hope, tho' hope should always be deluded, for hope itself is happiness, and its frustrations, however frequent, are yet less dreadful than its extinction." Johnson's various observations on the theme are so pointed and profound that a book on *Samuel Johnson and the Theme of Hope* must have seemed a good idea to T. F. Wharton. What he has produced is something different, perhaps equally interesting in its own way: a brisk reading of Johnson's major works held together by



intermittent reference to Hope, *Dreams and Delusions*. There is very little reference to temporary psychologizing, or indeed to temporary thought generally, apart from a suggestion made in passing that Johnson was covert sympathizer with the attitudes of Hobbes and Hume. Certainly his dogmatic objections, and the near hysterics of parts of a rejection of Soame Jenyns suggest such a possibility.

But studies of Samuel Johnson and the Thought of his Age have a way of being dull; serving only to establish how very typical a thinker Johnson was. Wharton is a very good reader of poetry. His penultimate chapter about "On the Death of Mr Lewis" something of a *tour de force* which deftly puts together many of the themes he has touched on in the course of his book.

Wharton has the interesting idea that Johnson was primarily a scholar, and points to the fact that the periods of greatest scholarly activity - the work on the *Dictionary*, the work on Shakespeare, and the later revision of the *Dictionary* - coincide with Johnson's most leisurely periods of "literary" activity. I don't know how this belief can be reconciled with Wharton's eloquent defence of Johnson as essentially a poet instead of "by nature, a writer of prose" at the end of his chapter on "The Vanity of Human Wishes". But apparent contradictions of this kind can be tolerated in a book as sprightly as this one.

Three words were missing from the caption to our cover picture of St John's Gate in the late July of 27: the building we meant to describe "next door to the home of the TLS", St John's Gate is in fact the headquarters of the Order of St John, to whom we apologize for this error, and humours its Library and Museum. The watercolour we reproduced is on loan from the Order's collections to the Johnson exhibition.

on show reflect this widened scope and embrace the expression of political cynicism, morbid fascination and bleak uncertainty. Irony too is present in the form of two telling postcard sculptures by Gilbert and George: a dead aeroplane and the shelter sketches of Henry Moore) provide the mind's epitomes of those events. Even with hindsight the choice of artists in both World Wars testifies to an enlightened and progressive patronage.

By the 1950s this tradition was in decay, though warfare and British involvement in it continued. The task was often complicated by the reluctance of politicians (even when soldiers landed, bombs dropped and blood was spilt) to use the name of war. Only in the last few years has the museum reviewed its relationship with the artist, and it is largely with the appointment of Angela Weight to its art department that there has been what might be termed a low-budget renaissance, cautious only in expenditure. The present exhibition of recent acquisitions shows a more rounded view of the artist's involvement with human strife; it is a large theme now and not easily summed up by pictures of "our boys" as they go to their death. The purchases and commissioned works

Russian dreams and nightmares

Zinoviy Zinik

MICHAEL PENNINGTON
Anton Chekhov
Cottesloe Theatre

ANTON CHEKHOV
Wild Honey
Lyttelton Theatre

Michael Pennington appears on stage in *Anton Chekhov* in a long black overcoat, apparently borrowed from Gogol. But the image he projects is less that of a literary phantom from the nineteenth century than that of a recent émigré from the Soviet Union, invited by the National Theatre as a visiting lecturer on the trials and tribulations of ideologized Russian existence. There is very little in this portrait of the historical Chekhov. Rather, this is a figure embodying a certain line of thought, and accompanied by material derived from Chekhov's biography and writings. Pennington has just finished playing *Strider* in an adaptation by the Moscow director Mark Rozovsky. In this role Pennington learnt to mimic a Tolstoyan animal meekness and humility. Before that he played Rasnikin in *Crime and Punishment* as adapted by Yuri Lyubimov, a Soviet director who has decided to stay in the West. For that Pennington mastered a political rhetoric, and on obsession with social injustice. In his present incarnation of Chekhov, he tries to follow a third path, evading the extremes of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as conceived within a Soviet context.

The idea of portraying Chekhov entered Pennington's head when he was crosslog Russia by the Trans-Siberian railway and realized that he was tracing the path of Chekhov's voyage to the penitentiary at Sakhalin - in reverse. But evidently on Pennington's travels it was the Gulag that had been left behind. Perhaps for this reason, the persistent motif in his Chekhov is anti-Utopian: the present should never be sacrificed for the future, this Chekhov warns us - a phrase that would be spurious in Soviet ideology. This Chekhov

busies himself with stocktaking his own past before his departure into a better world: pacing between armchairs shrouded in white, he packs up his books in a trunk and reminisces about the forbidden fruits (cherries) of his childhood, about the corpse of a seagull he had found, about his topographical charts of the area surrounding his estate at Melichovo, and about his own nostalgia for Western culture and civilization, and for intelligent conversation. The grandson of a serf, he has no regrets in conceding to Tolstoy his role as spokesman for the simple, honest People. This Chekhov, who knows the liturgy by heart, regards the mystical paradoxes of Dostoevsky with suspicion. He avoids taking any stand in the classical Russian debate between "Europeans" and "Slavophiles": his fate was to be born as a Russian destined to become a European. The Orthodox doctrine of suffering as advocated by Dostoevsky repels him; as does Tolstoy's religion of peasant humility. Chekhov attempts to survive without any brand of ecclesiastical mysticism, without the Shamanism of "high ideas". His quest is to defend the rational intellect against the general tendency towards mysticism, to perceive the profoundest truths in details that no one else takes the care to notice. In a letter to one of his friends, Chekhov writes:

Apart from the people who speak interminably of Optimism and Pessimism, apart from the Sceptics, Mystics, Psychopaths, Jesuits, Philosophers, Liberals and Conservatives, there is a group of people who belong to a different order, people with clearly conscious aims.

To the British with their general hatred of any kind of metaphysics, Pennington's Chekhov must be an extremely attractive figure. It is even possible that Chekhov's popularity with the British public is explained by a misunderstanding of his allergy to the politicization of life. The crucial point is that Chekhov's anti-political stance is an existential necessity: there is no other way of preserving clarity of mind and a reliable memory in a country where the population is habituated to the intrusion of Government and Party ideology in personal life, and where on the other

hand on intelligentsia deprived of even the smallest measure of political power is left to dream up an obscure metaphysical lore within the confines of four walls, while at the same time out on the street people are being arrested and led off to Siberia to the victorious tunes of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's anthems to a glorious future.

Indulging himself in this same decay of metaphysical ideas, Platonov, the hero of *Wild Honey*, a posthumously discovered early play of Chekhov's, is gradually consumed by physical decay. In Michael Frayn's adaptation, Platonov (played by Ian McKellen) develops into the archetype of the Russian demagogue. But despite all his indictments, the paradox is that society not only tolerates him, but is even pleased to confer upon him the dignity of a Holy Fool; he is hired to soothe the conscience of those around him, his mind and his tongue (which are not always perfectly co-ordinated) lend comfort to others' bruised minds, while his body becomes an intercessor in others' failed marriages. He is a demonstration to the local burghers that "at least everything is not lost". People love and pity him as the embodiment of their own youthful aspirations, and equally detest him as the embodiment of their own failed ideals. It must be said that, in the original, Platonov is a far less clearly defined character, even by the measure of his own moral and metaphysical anguish. Chekhov's Platonov can still be forgiven, because he doesn't yet know what all this is leading to, all this high metaphysics in words, and low ignominy in actions. Michael Frayn's Platonov knows everything in advance. He already knows that it is very easy in our age to become a dissident or party demagogue, but very difficult to opt for loneliness and honesty. In Frayn's adjustment of the plot, and in its hot, summery atmosphere, it takes on the nature of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with the amorous agency of Puck played by boredom and political impotence; what other way out is there than adultery with another man's wife or another woman's husband? An alternative would be revolution. Michael Frayn omits mentioning that Platonov's wife is reading

Masoch (as we are told by Chakhov), and so he translates his relations with women on to a less pathological basis than in the original. And in the appended episode of the village horse-thief's murder, Frayn manufactures a bloody portent of the forthcoming Revolution.

Chekhov, as is well known, had a dream of falling asleep with the hope of waking up from the nightmare of the present into the radiant light of a future forty years on. Pennington ironically cites this dream in his theatrical portrait of Chekhov: ironically, because of the delicate certainty of hindsight which reveals that he would have woken up in the heyday of the Stalinist purges. As with much in Chekhov, including Platonov's social aphorisms, Soviet ideologists have sought to expropriate this dream of a golden sleep for humanity. Just as they sought, for example, to expropriate Chekhov's exhortations to work, to be absorbed in the healing and educative process of labour. These are habits of tongue that for the Russian of our own times can only evoke associations with the corrective labour of the prison-camps. In his introduction to the play, Frayn remarks that he has deprived Chekhov's characters of indefiniteness. But he does, on the other hand, revolve for the British audience Chekhov's ideological evasiveness, his instinct for self-parody - the quality which, if we are to trust Pennington, was what Chekhov saw most in himself, and which is perhaps the only weapon of self-defence in the context of Soviet dogma.

So Pennington's Chekhov revisits and reassesses himself, just as the performance is framed and structured by the appearance of the Black Monk. This figure, from a famous story of Chekhov's, is a kind of mirage, a figure of megalomaniac delirium, which appears to the hero, Professor Kovrin, and without whose presence Kovrin would become a nobody, and recognize his own mediocrity. But for Chekhov as an author the Monk is also a totem of the human conscience, a power that prevents us from becoming the slave to yet further ideologies. In turn, Chekhov's spirit keeps returning to us as a symbol of intellectual honesty.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 185

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than August 24. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that, the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 186" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on August 31.

1 "Seagullplunder", he would say. "Seagullplunder verbiage." "Eb" said Platt. "Eloquent rapso-deo." "Eb" said Platt. "Eloquent rapso-deo."

2 I am sorry to find you participating in the vulgar error of the reading public, to whom an unusual collocation of words, involving a juxtaposition of antipathetic ideas, immediately suggests the notion of hyperoxysophistical paradoxology.

3 Morris Zapp indicated the large plastic disc dangling from his lapel, which had his name printed inside a circular inscription: "Vith International Congress of Literary Semioticians". On his other lapel was a bright enamel button which declared, "Every Decoding Is Another Encoding".

FIFTY YEARS ON

The TLS of August 2, 1934 carried a review of John Florio: *The life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England* by Frances Yates.

Unquoth only exaggerated Rabelais: Florio betrayed Montaigne. But he created for all time a piece of English literature; and in this, as in his other works, he gave to the English of the Elizabethan the very scope which it needed. Leading her readers through his writings, Miss Yates shows how his dialogues differ from and surpass the usual thing that was popular in his time, and how they make for culture, refinement, education. But his great work (and not only in his dictionary) was linguistic. He looked

Competition No 181

Winner: Mr C. B. Coward

Answers:

1 Wherever there was the whitewashed wall of an officer's room or any other apartment in which English gentlemen are forced to kick their heels, there, likely enough, the head of Keate would be seen, scratched or drawn. . . . Anybody without the least notion of drawing could still draw a speaking, oaf scolding, likeness of Keate.

A. W. Kinglake, *Eothen*, chapter 18.

2 I can't see him as a headmaster. I thought they had to be 100 years old and seven feet high, with eyes of flame and long white beards. To me a headmaster has always been a sort of blend of Epstein's Genesis and something out of the book of Revelation.

P. G. Wodehouse, "The Voice from the Past".

3 Though a clergyman, very orthodox and of rigid morals, he indulged himself in an oath, which was "God's-my-life". When you were but in your lesson, he turned upon you a round staring eye like a flash; and he had a trick of pinching you under the chin, and by the lobes of the ears, till he would make the blood come.

Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography*.

Fascination and uncertainty

Tom Phillips

New Acquisitions
Imperial War Museum, until October 7

Some museums are hard to pass by without a twinge of cultural guilt, a voice inside, one saying, "It's a long time since you spent an hour in there". The Imperial War Museum does not seem to be quite in this category. The huge twin barrels of anti-aircraft guns (albeit balfcamouflaged by municipal blooms) pointing straight at the would-be visitor seem calculated to signal a no-go area for the art-lover; yet, having braved these and other outdoor military, be will discover within some of the best British artists represented by works which found them at their most excited and provoked, as well as many minor artists who, lo often difficult circumstances, flowered into resolution. Vorticism, for example, only seems to match reality when faced with machines and men-as-machines.

No poets were sent to sing Arms and the Man, nor composers to write their Battle Sym-

phony, at Dunkirk or on the Somme, whereas artists were steadily commissioned to make visual order out of the chaos of battle and blitz and many of their images (Paul Nash's sea of dead aeroplanes and the shelter sketches of Henry Moore) provide the mind's epitomes of those events. Even with hindsight the choice of artists in both World Wars testifies to an enlightened and progressive patronage.

By the 1950s this tradition was in decay, though warfare and British involvement in it continued. The task was often complicated by the reluctance of politicians (even when soldiers landed, bombs dropped and blood was spilt) to use the name of war. Only in the last few years has the museum reviewed its relationship with the artist, and it is largely with the appointment of Angela Weight to its art department that there has been what might be termed a low-budget renaissance, cautious only in expenditure. The present exhibition of recent acquisitions shows a more rounded view of the artist's involvement with human strife; it is a large theme now and not easily summed up by pictures of "our boys" as they go to their death. The purchases and commissioned works

on show reflect this widened scope and embrace the expression of political cynicism, morbid fascination and bleak uncertainty. Irony too is present in the form of two telling postcard sculptures by Gilbert and George: a dead aeroplane and the shelter sketches of Henry Moore) provide the mind's epitomes of those events. Even with hindsight the choice of artists in both World Wars testifies to an enlightened and progressive patronage.

The War Museum has the most pleasant catchment of all institutions that show and do this makes the presence of recent work all the more relevant: one can watch, any day, the bers of school parties surprised by the work seen at this tangent, especially in the work of the museum's first artist-in-residence, David Masl (a nicely outrageous choice). In Lambeth there is a permanent collection which includes work by artists of the quality of Rita Donaghy and R. B. Kitaj, and whose work inspires optimism. South of the river, things still.

John Florio

Occupying the stage

Elisabeth Croll

ROSS TERRILL
The White-Boned Demon: A biography of
Madame Mao Zedong
446pp. Heinemann. £16.
0434 766526

It is perhaps symbolic and more than appropriate that in Jiang Qing's early career as an actress, her most successful theatrical role was that of Nora in *A Doll's House*. Like many an aspiring young woman of her times, she saw her own struggle for independence in defiance of China's conventions mirrored in Ibsen's play. Jiang Qing, or Lou Ping as she was then known, had to make her own way in the competitive and bitchy world of Shanghai show-business in the 1930s with little more than her own wit, will, boundless energy and a degree of style and talent to recommend her. In the absence of family connections, she exercised both her own personal charm and political allegiances to advantage, but perhaps because she was never to become a major star, she came deeply to resent the power and influence of the movie directors and producers. Indeed thirty years later, during the Cultural Revolution, she was to turn the tables and exercise her own power to facilitate personal revenge. The reappearance of the same personalities many years later is probably the reason why Ross Terrill, in his new biography of Jiang Qing (Madame Mao Zedong), has paid such attention to this little-known period of her life. He has unearthed many new sources and sought out survivors of bohemian Shanghai, including Jiang Qing's ex-lovers and former husband, which is perhaps why the salacious details of her early sexual exploits loom unnecessarily large in the first sections of the book.

If Jiang Qing was so resentful of her dependence on the patronage of the movie directors of Shanghai, it is ironic that her independence of self and circumstance was to be so circumscribed by her relationship with the greatest director of them all - Mao Zedong. Her own doll's house was to be fashioned by the terms of the marriage contract itself. Terrill lays to rest the myth that she single-handedly seduced Mao and wrenched him from his second wife and companion of the Long March. Mutually attracted as they were, it is clear that Mao's liaison with Jiang Qing, an actress with a questionable political history, was not popular among the veterans of the Long March and the price of its legitimization was her exclusion from public and political life. Without the personal stature or political credentials of the other wives who were established in their own right, Jiang Qing was to have no role to play separate from that of Mao's wife. Mao himself and the Party bureaucracy seem to have colluded in keeping her preoccupied with Mao's well-being, her health and the domestic politics of the Mao household, complicated as they were by his former marriages.

Later, husband was to use wife and wife was to use husband for their joint and separate political purposes, and the Cultural Revolution in the mid 1960s marked the début of Jiang Qing in political and cultural affairs. Indeed, in her army uniform she was to become a most familiar figure, so much so that Terrill, in an exhaustive look at the power politics of the Cultural Revolution, concludes that the Revolution was largely her stage, influenced as it was by her personal vanity, individual frustrations and her appetite for power and revenge. He argues that without Jiang Qing there would have been no Cultural Revolution and certainly not a revolution that was cultural. This interpretation, defined in such personal terms, is bound to generate a degree of controversy both within and outside China and it raises a number of intriguing questions about the biography itself.

Much of the book has to do with the personal relationship between husband and wife, family members and the top leadership tiers of Party and government. Much of it is based on rumour and gossip, in which Beijing (Peking) life abounds, and the questions are - is the book an authentic view of life at the top and does this close examination of the role of the individual and the "underside" of Chinese political life, as opposed to the more serious issues

of substance, contribute to a greater understanding of political events of the past thirty years? The first question has to do with Terrill's sources, and is a difficult one. On the one hand he has deployed his very considerable initiative and ingenuity in using new Chinese sources professionally; on the other, despite careful documentation, it remains true that much of the reporting of such intimate details as expressions, gestures and confidences still has to be taken on trust. In defence of the author, it is always more difficult to document the informal and the intimate, and of course it is a fact that rumour and gossip, whatever their accuracy, have a role all their own in influencing and determining events and that this is especially so in China.

Although very little public attention is directed in China towards the informal and intimate details of the leaders' personal lives, the degree of interplay between personal and political factors is very much a feature of the political process. It is one of the strengths of this biography that it draws attention to the role of family, kin and other personal networks and the importance of "connections" in determining lines of personal and political patronage and allegiance. Hence at one level it is as necessary to know as much about these as about the issues and strategies of socialist development. However it is a difficult balance to achieve and Terrill is not immune from both overplaying the role of his subject at the expense of event or issue or of taking advantage of hindsight to attach too much significance to earlier events. At the same time, he has written a very readable and revealing book, and one which does not end with the Cultural Revolution.

Terrill discusses in some detail the struggle

Knowing their place

Richard Harris

JANE HUNTER
The Gospel of Gentility: American women
missionaries to turn-of-the-century China
318pp. Yale University Press. £22.50.
0300 028784

At the end of the nineteenth century American self-confidence was reaching a peak of energy and power. Where, overseas, might this energy give expression to American ideals? A historian of American missions has seen the alternatives at that period as the missionary movement and imperialism: "Wheels driven by the same explosive energy generated by a sense of superiority and moral duty". Once the temptation of imperialism faded after the first foray in the Philippines, the view across the Pacific promised a great arena for such moral enterprise: China, where countless millions of "beathans" waited to be raised from poverty and decadence by the regenerating power of American spiritual and material progress. China beckoned as the jewel in the crown of American Idealism.

By taking as her subject the women's part in this missionary assault, Jane Hunter is not simply carrying out a fashionable act of reparation for a neglected minority in the history of the American missionary movement in China. In the expansion that began in the late 1880s the women missionaries outnumbered the men, allowing that most of the married women had begun by responding to the same powerful inner call and chafed when motherhood and domestic duties cramped their missionary activity. Sixty years after the first American missionaries set foot in China there were, in 1890, 800 American Protestant missionaries in the country. By 1909 there were 1,600; by 1919 well over 3,000 were carrying the tidings of salvation to the most remote parts of China.

Hunter's book is not, however, primarily an account of the success or failure of this movement nor a study of how it appeared to the Chinese. It concentrates on the ideas, the expectations, the emotions, the trials of the women missionaries, single and married; of how they adapted to life in China, what they wore, ate and how they lived. Undoubtedly it was the unmarried women who were less

for succession both before and after Mao's death, his death itself and the subsequent arrest and trial of Jiang Qing along with her cohorts in the Gang of Four. Although it was known long before this by many observers that she herself was not popular, most were still taken aback by the particularly vicious campaign against her, which was composed of an uncomfortable mix of personal and political accusations. An important element, and one which captured the attention of feminists outside China, was the time-honoured prejudice displayed against women who stepped beyond the secondary roles assigned to them within the world of men's politics. As an old adage has it, "a woman in politics is like a stepping stone to disorder", but in defence of the Chinese people it must also be said that disorder is what many of them felt they had suffered far too long. Twenty years of constant political campaigns and political manoeuvring had taken their toll, and it was not just those who had suffered in the Cultural Revolution who joined in the quite remarkable and widespread celebrations which accompanied the arrest of the Gang of Four.

However, it would be a mistake to attribute the campaign against Jiang Qing solely to sexual discrimination. That she never lived down her reputation as a low-status actress was partly due to facets of her own complex and by all accounts quite difficult personality, and the fact that she seems never to have left the stage behind her. Whether it was in domestic or national politics, on a commune or in a factory, she seems to have courted personal attention, sought personal privilege and conducted herself in such a way as to suggest a personality given over to calculation in pursuit of personal advantage. Terrill, who sympathizes with her

fettered and could make closer contacts with their own sex in China.

The first such contact would usually be with a language teacher. Among the single women a female teacher might be engaged and often a "helper", part secretary, part domestic aide. Hunter describes one such friendship of an unmarried missionary who admitted that she chose her young Chinese helper almost "in preference to a cat or a dog or a teddy bear". And as with a teddy bear, she reported in an innocently frank home letter: "I slept with her the other night; the first time I slept with a Chinese girl. I like 'em fine."

The truth was that just as American men could bask in the loving subordination of their wives, so in their way the single women missionaries could look with unwitting condescension on helpers who even more readily and uncomplainingly acknowledged the superior status of their employer. This naturally assumed superiority was not simply cultural. It even included a distinctive physical awareness. The American women were invariably taller and stronger. Even Chinese men seemed by their standards puny.

Relations between these women missionaries and Chinese men were the easier for the lack of any sexual promptings on either side. It was hardly surprising that male language teachers, as members of a scholarly class, born into a tradition that elevated poetry, painting or calligraphy as admired male skills, should have seemed somewhat unmanly to these tough American girls. Not all the American women may have appreciated that they themselves, seen from the Chinese side, simply could not be fitted into the standardized Chinese conception of women. They were indeed "western she-tigers", calling forth no sexual response from Chinese males.

The strong division in Chinese culture between male and female, in status and action, meant that evangelism among Chinese women could be conducted only by women missionaries. "Could women go to heaven too?" asked the astonished potential converts. Even the comforting replies were rarely enough to bring them into the Christian fold however. Most converts were of the lower classes; few were educated. By 1920 no more than 800,000 Christians could be claimed in the American Protestant field, a figure which included all the

strengths and is sensitive to her weakness. It concludes that in the world of politics she was egocentric in the extreme and reduced to little more than making a distinction between those who were for and those who were against her. She was caught in a web of personal and political contradictions. In public she reduced theatre and opera performances to a minimum and to black-and-white moral messages. Politically, she wanted to create an individual personality in her own right and yet at the same time she publicly upheld her unique position as the most intimate interpreter of Mao's words and wishes in order to validate her position. She couldn't have it both ways and in the end, in the absence of Mao, her own popular and political power base was lost. Or did she? The personal power apart, recent reports suggest that the party which the Gang of Four advocated still has some support in China today.

At the time of her trial, her last appearance centre-stage, she probably elicited more sympathy than at any other time during her life. Unlike her fellow defendants, she was spoken and defiant, quite rightly refusing to accept personal responsibility for the Cultural Revolution and to collude in the attempt to protect Mao and China's political system by sharing responsibility. However, her own defence was not enough to save her from prison, where she sits to this day protesting innocence.

In the short term, this biography has made a substantial contribution to the still difficult task of separating the woman from her reputation but the case of Jiang Qing is likely to be long time for a final verdict to be passed.

students in high schools and universities and the missionaries.

It had soon become apparent that evangelism alone would make slow headway when the Chinese responded readily to any educational opportunity offered to them. Schools and soon universities, set up by the missionaries were handsomely funded from substantial China, Western missionary-inspired educational influence was to prove much more potent than Christian doctrine. The missionary colleges opened the door to Western learning, a much more marketable commodity for the westward-looking China of the 19th century.

Scattered through the book are some observations on the culture clash and mutual apprehension which faced these women missionaries and the Chinese. Hunter comments on the missionary evangelical concept of gender as destiny, as the natural essence of gender, against the Chinese conception of gender as role. This leads her to argue that the Western culture of feeling could not make sense in a culture such as China's in which the social role was pre-eminent. Where the individualism of the West would promote behaviour in accordance with convictions, Chinese culture would always encourage appropriate responses to social circumstances and the consequent acting out of roles.

A book of this kind, well-researched and generous in its appreciation of a now distant era, is of interest for the light it throws on a China that is once more thirty years after contact, as it was sixty years ago. After decades of severely restricted relations, what do matters now stand? There can be no doubt that the doctrinal rigours of Western culture much emphasized the Chinese capacity to accept obligation to play an allotted role. This is an aspect of China still not fully appreciated. The Chinese are, however, actors, playing their parts with mirror-like precision and assurance. Early in this century the missionaries were struck by the ability of Chinese students in public speaking. They were stuck for a phrase, improvising when they were self-conscious; in short, always able to subordinate true feeling to the performance of appropriate action. If everyone knew their part in Confucian society, so in the Chinese theatre the role-playing is still evident.

Whom to commemorate

William Scott

FRANÇOIS GENDRON
La Jeunesse sous Thermidor
240pp. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
150fr.

MICHEL VOVELLE
The Fall of the French Monarchy
Translated by Susan Burke
247pp. Cambridge University Press. £19.50.
(paperback, £7.95).

MORRIS SLAVIN
The French Revolution in Miniature: Section
Droits-de-l'Homme, 1789-1795
499pp. Guildford: Princeton University
Press. £30.80.

GWYNNE LEWIS and COLIN LUCAS (Editors)
Beyond the Terror: Essays in French regional
and social history, 1794-1815
276pp. Guildford: Columbia University Press.
£22.50.

CHERYL B. WELCH
Liberty and Utility: The French Ideologies
and the transformation of liberalism
289pp. Guildford: Columbia University Press.
\$39.

DENIS WORONOFF
The Thermidorian Régime and the Directory
1794-1799
Translated by Julian Jackson
207pp. Cambridge University Press. £18.50
(paperback, £6.95).

0512 251141
0512 21725X

With the bicentenary of the French Revolution being actively prepared for, a relatively new classification of its historians is emerging, between those who wish to celebrate it and those who try to understand it. To some extent this division corresponds to the long-standing one between the Marxists and their critics, between those who recite the "revolutionary catechism" of Jacobinism, as revised by Lenin, and the true revisionists who, following the right-wing tradition of being "above politics", proclaim their allegiance to eternal values, in this case those of objective scholarship. To some extent too, it corresponds to a Franco-British divide since French historians, still seen here as generally inclined to the left, are suspected of being predominantly celebrants. Thus they accept the "myth" of the revolutionaries and acclaim 1789 as a new dawn heralding an epoch of liberty, equality and fraternity: this failed to live up to its radiant promise only because of the selfish machinations of counter-revolutionaries, whose elimination therefore became a duty for all French patriots. Unable to escape from this rhetoric, to which the Revolution is the origin of all that is inspiring in France's modern history, they cannot attain an understanding of its significance and, especially, cannot bring themselves to condemn the Terror. British historians are better placed to pierce the rhetoric both of the actors and interpreters and to weigh dispassionately the arguments of either side.

Nevertheless, even in Britain, interpretation of the Revolution does have political overtones. Some have felt that the whole revolutionary venture was a tragic mistake, by which the French showed themselves less politically mature than the English, thus spawning their tradition of extremism. Some such attitude coloured the works of Alfred Cobban. Norman Hampson's recent book on Montesquieu and Rousseau and their legacies, by its obvious preference for the cautious reformer over the radical visionary - seeing Montesquieu as an honorary Englishman and Rousseau as harbinger of an evidently Continental totalitarianism - occupies a distinguished place in the same tradition. But, of course, it is a feature of that tradition to be moderate in tone. Even though Professor Hampson explicitly refers to recent English political controversies, he is judicious in his use of arguments which, when employed by the French new Right, can be vituperative in the extreme.

François Furet, coiner of the "revolutionary catechism" phrase, former Marxist turned ardent revisionist, argues that the time has come when even Frenchmen can leave behind old

battles. But he calls for a ceasefire in bellicose interpretation of the Revolution as the seed-bed for all totalitarian ideologies, hardly reinforcing his plea for a depoliticization of its history. In his preface to François Gendron's book on the *Jeunesse dorée* Pierre Chaunu refers to Furet's "incomparable" work and extends Jacobin misdeeds "ou goulas soviétique, aux destructions de la révolution culturelle chinoise et à l'autogénocide Khmer rouge au Cambodge". The Revolution set France back economically (due to its "perturbation of the mechanisms of the market"). The Jacobin régime was a caecorous growth which struck down the intelligentsia of France. The country has never recovered. Such comments, coming from so distinguished a historian, presumably have more weight than the small change of right-wing journalistic polemic, but the tone is identical.

Even "Jacobin" historians have not entirely excused, though they have tried to explain, the excesses of the Terror. Chaunu excuses the murders and assaults which the *Jeunesse dorée* after Thermidor perpetrated upon Jacobins and *sans-culottes* by reference to the persecutions of the Terror, just as the terrorists invoked the plots of the aristocrats. Gendron, however, likens their activities to those of the *camelous du Roi*, the youth arm of *Action française*, beating up Léon Blum, socialist and Jew. *Jeunesse*, dismissive of "their" ideas, fed to "liberty progressively recovered", in Chaunu's phrase, Gendron confirms the sombre picture of the classic historians of the Revolution. He is scathing about the valour of the pampered *jeunesse*, dismissive of "their" ideas, fed to them with their lavish lunches. Like their 1930s emulators, they were both contributors to and symptoms of the decomposition of parliamentary régimes destined to abdicate to illiberal

dictatorships. Gendron's well-documented study ends with a distinction between historical objectivity and "human neutrality": proclaiming his "practical and militant" sympathy for the men and women who collapsed from hunger in the streets of Paris in the Year III, he affirms this to be no obstacle to a theoretical understanding of Thermidor.

Thermidor saw the ending of many revolutionary illusions. This is a theme of several of the works under review. The "tout est possible" of 1789 had led to conflict; disaster and deception. Does this, in itself, condemn the whole Revolution as a foolhardy attempt, in Hampson's terms, to use "will" to overcome "circumstances"? Michel Vovelle deals with the origins of the Revolution. His preface (he wisely writes his own) shows him conscious of the danger of accepting the illusions of the apoch. Referring to criticism of the "revolutionary catechism", he welcomes controversy and, like Gendron, obviously thinks that a subject treated with dispassion becomes an object of indifference. Luckily for his readers, Vovelle's work is most stimulating.

Clearly, with his emphasis on Ancien Régime society as still essentially feudal, his use of terms such as "mode of production", "commercial capitalism", "bourgeois ideology" and the like he is open to the charge of "mouthing the tired old clichés" of the Marxist paradigm. Indeed he does not always avoid a simplistic dichotomy between backward-looking and progressive forces, too easily personified as nobles in decline and bourgeois advance. But the tone is open and un-bogus. He does not reject the revisionist view that its downfall was accidental, avoidable had the king formed a "gentry" on the English model, a new élite drawn from nobles and bourgeois, which would have obviated violent revolution. To assert this would be "to impute to the absolute monarchy an independence it simply did not have. It is to underestimate the force of the attack (spearheaded by the growing forces of the bourgeoisie) on the social and political aspects of the ancien régime."

Vovelle demonstrates both the weakness of the monarchy and the intransigence of key sectors of the nobility. He has greater difficulty in highlighting the bourgeois offensive. He is surprisingly weak, given his interest in *mentalités*, in the field of ideas and attitudes. Some attention to established ideology, and a perfunctory treatment of the philosophers, are enlivened by a more specifically Vovellian discussion of popular culture. But middle-class culture is ignored, despite the fact that merchants, lawyers and professional men, who were so influential in the Revolution, were extremely articulate in both their career and their leisure activities. Attention to the views they expressed might well have strengthened Vovelle's interpretation. Instead, his fairness makes him give undue prominence to a theory of élites which obscures more than it explains, thus perpetuating the notion that the bourgeoisie, suddenly politically active in 1789, had had no ideological preparation for its role.

Nevertheless, in general, Vovelle's judgments seem admirable. At his best, he can sum up a complex problem in a few brilliant lines. The marriage he arranges between *Annales*-type history and *l'histoire événementielle* is

from ton little.

To sim to show how the Revolution affected one has the power, perhaps not enough unless Cobb. Of course, Cobb's talents are unique as is his idiosyncratic approach to history - and these are not appreciated by everyone. In a recent critique, Furet (*aujourd'hui*) castigates Cobb without mercy - for his *four-nail* attitude, his denial of method and neglect of concept; his novelistic preference for recreating people's lives, thoughts and passions. In *Beyond the Terror*, a collection of essays by Cobb's friends and pupils, Martyn Lyons provides an assessment of his work. Fairly critical at times, he counters some of the wilder remarks of Furet ("Cobb is a historian of society for whom only individuals exist") by praising his delineation of collective mentalities related to place, sex, social class or profession. And one could argue that Cobb's best work explores milieux, which are, by definition, collective, and which mould the activities of individuals in certain ways. To overstate his dependence on narrative history (Furet) or on *l'histoire événementielle* (Lyons), seems unjustified. Few of Cobb's works centre on narratives or events: *The Police and the People*, for example, explores a serious problem, but unlike Furet's version of "conceptual history" does so with a thorough knowledge of the archives.

Certainly the essays in *Beyond the Terror* give abundant evidence of intensive research - they show none of the "mental indolence" amiably attributed by Furet to the authors' mentor. Concepts are not absent. Colin Lucas illuminates southern violence via Yves Castan's notion of *honnêteté sociale*, without lapsing into technicolour localism for its own sake. Gwynne Lewis sets his vivid account of a more political violence in a society coming under capitalist pressure. Peter Jones, writing on agrarian individualism, rejects some of the generalizations of the Marxist historians in an article whose close reasoning would doubtless have impressed the Marx who began his career with a noteworthy essay on common rights and the theft of wood.

Colin Jones's topic, moreover, relates to Cheryl Welch's excellent study of the Ideologues: Jones analyses, in the field of welfare, a dialectic between idealism and pragmatism, in which the Revolution's grandiose schemes of universal welfare made for limited "patching up" actions aimed at "making the world safe for entrepreneurs". Welch's book outlines the philosophic basis of this change. She traces the Ideologues' retreat from a rhetoric of natural rights to one based on utilitarianism, as they quickly realized that the former, in 1789, rashly seemed to promise everything to everyone. Could not a pure but active élite help to mould a society in which the greatest good for all could be attained without the political participation of the populace or the recognition of economic rights for the dispossessed, thus getting rid of the dreadful legacy of Rousseau?

However, such a hope, intensified in the dark days of the Terror, was to provide no resistance to the malpractices of the Directory or to Napoleon's dictatorship. The former, analysed with such finesse by Denis Woronoff, was formed of "a much-disparaged political class, which... fought all the harder since it made no distinction between its own personal interests and the common interest". These blood-boltered profiteers of the Revolution were, like the Emperor, hardly troubled by the Ideologues. The latter's claim that a science of society, countering the sectional interests of the idle rich and the new nobility and fostering the industrious and rational classes, would work to the benefit of the common interest and produce general well-being, founded on the irrationality of men and on the political and economic inequalities of early nineteenth-century Europe. Extremism - this time socialism and communism - arose from the inadequacy of moderation.

From 1748 to 1848, from Montesquieu to Marx - a route of war and revolution, but also of the capitalist achievement celebrated in the Manifesto. American, British and French historians, as is fitting, have contributed pre-eminently to our understanding of this period: our choice of what, if anything, to celebrate must be guided by their findings.



Detail from Cézanne's "Crâne sur une draperie" (1902-06), reproduced from Paul Cézanne, the watercolours: A catalogue raisonné by John Rewald (487pp. Thames and Hudson. £75. 0500 091641) which will be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS.

Cheryl B. Welch

Devotions and divisions

Sheridan Gilley

KEENAN
The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: A sociological study
 285pp. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. £20.
 071710892

DESMOND BOWEN
Papal Cardinal Cullen and the Shaping of Modern Irish Catholicism
 311pp. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. £20.
 071710899

AMBROSE MACAULAY
Dr Russell of Maynooth
 338pp. Darton, Longman and Todd. £21.
 0232515972

By 1900 the once distant outpost of Catholic Ireland had become the heart of a spiritual empire of Irish emigrants settled throughout the Americas and Australasia, while Irish priests preached the faith to the heathen in the furthest corners of the earth. This international religious community was the outcome of the nineteenth-century Catholic revival in Ireland, which some scholars have interpreted as a revolution in Irish Catholicism. According to David Miller, Sunday Mass attendance in Ireland before 1840 may have counted only 40 per cent of the population; the modern rates of church-going of over 90 per cent, which have made Eire the most "practising" of Catholic nations, were the achievement of a more efficient Church working after 1850 with a falling population. Emmet Larkin has argued that after 1850 a "Devotional Revolution", inspired by Roman "Ultramontane" pious practice, changed utterly the traditional folkloric faith of the Irish, with a new kind of holy fervour. Larkin ascribes much of the credit for renewing discipline and devotion to Ireland's first Cardinal, Paul Cullen, who, in the words of Joseph Lee, "transformed the Church from a Latin-American type institution into one of the most efficiently marshalled Churches in Europe", as part of the wider economic and social modernization of Ireland as a whole.

These points are all questioned by Desmond Keenan in *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. Keenan considers the Church of 1800 a healthy institution. The half-century before 1850 was the era of innovation in Irish Catholicism; the Cullen years saw mere consolidation. The nineteenth-century revival was not a "revolution", but was in complete continuity with the past, as it rested on the solid foundations of the ancient Irish faith.

Pioneer and prophet

A. M. Allechin

CHRISTIAN THODBERG and ANDERS PONTOPPIDAN THYSSSEN (Editors)
N. F. S. Grundtvig, Tradition and Renewal: Grundtvig's vision of man and people; education and the Church, in relation to world issues today
 432pp. Copenhagen: Danish Institute. Dkr 162.
 08774290452

NIELS LYHNE JENSEN (Editor)
A Grundtvig Anthology: Selections from the writings of N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872)
 Translated by Edward Broadbridge and Niels Lyhne Jensen
 195pp. Cambridge: James Clarke. £10.95.
 0227678850

The Danish writer and critic Poul Borum, after noting that N. F. S. Grundtvig, whom he describes as "our greatest poet", is virtually unknown outside Denmark, goes on to add, "Yet Grundtvig is not really known within Denmark either... He is enormous and formidable and mysterious and remote." Yet this remarkable man - who on his political and public side has a touch of Gladstone about him, moving steadily towards the left as he reaches his eighties, and who on his imaginative and visionary side has more than a touch of William Blake - was none the less a unity, his life forming a coherent, if complex and sometimes troubled whole.

Born in 1783, he could recall from his childhood the first rumours of the French Revolution

Keenan insists on the uniformity of the eighteenth-century Irish Church, an elective pre-lacy for a priest not a bishop, for whom even women may have had the right to vote, was the exception to the diocesan norm. The *clerici vagi*, or "couple-beggar" clergy who celebrated clandestine marriages, represented a minority abuse beside the decent parish priesthood, despite the ecclesiastical failings of drunkenness, factionalism and ambition. Innovations in philanthropy, devotion and the religious life were more often due to priests and the laity than to bishops; and the chief episcopal initiatives occurred from the 1820s, when the celebrated Bishop James Doyle introduced distinctive clerical dress, Confraternities of Christian Doctrine, retreats for priests and an end to "stations" (confession and the mass in private houses). Many changes were pioneered in Dublin by Cullen's greter archiepiscopal predecessor, Daniel Murray:

founding the three religious orders of nuns, the re-establishment of the Irish College in Rome, the founding of [the missionary College of] All Hallows, the foundation of the Irish Vincentians... the welcoming of the temperance crusader Fr Mathew, the introduction of devotions to the Sacred Heart, the first attempts at parish missions, the introduction of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith.

But these novelties were not "reforms". There was a world of folk religion, of ascetic or riotous pilgrimage, holy wells and putting holy water into whiskey. Yet, except on Purgatory, there was little contradiction between official and popular Catholicism, which were both solidly Tridentine. Church-going may have been less frequent than it later became, but it was high by most Continental standards, it was not a cause of clerical complaint and the Irish faithful were mostly devout and well-instructed in their faith.

Keenan is always precise about detail, especially of administration and canon law; there is surely no better short introduction than this to the formal structures of the Irish Church. Yet his writing has about it a clerical dryness, so that he does not quite touch the matter at its heart. Keenan argues that, by 1850, the more primitive old chapels had been replaced with decent if modest buildings. But his own evidence suggests that the new devotions, like holy pictures and statues, were rare outside Dublin and the chapels of the friars and convents, and it was after 1850 that more richly decorated buildings came into use, a new kind of holy place, for rich and poor alike, centred on cult, priest, altar and careful ritual, the

modern foci for popular devotion. Certainly the Irish Church, as it emerged into a sacred rural landscape, needed the holy building to inspire them. David Miller's statistics and S. J. Connolly's recent monograph on pre-Famine Catholicism indicate a dramatic change of Catholic temper, and Keenan's own discussions of religion are rather external. He remarks that the Brompton Oratory's flamboyantly Roman Ultramontanism "never existed at any time in Ireland", while citing its leading influences on Irish devotion two priests of that Oratory, Fober and Dalglish. Indeed Keenan argues that the English influence was also strong in the pre-nineteenth-century Irish Church, and finds little evidence of a distinctively Gaelic spirituality. Here or elsewhere, he tells us whatever he does not know, and against the bolder theses of other scholars his caution is most welcome.

Keenan denies the significance of Cardinal Cullen, defining Cullen's leading trait as suspiciousness. The characteristic is granted by Desmond Bowen in his ungenerous, grudging and carping monograph, *Paul Cardinal Cullen and the Shaping of Modern Irish Catholicism*, though Bowen ascribes to Cullen an influence on Ireland as potent as O'Connell's. Bowen finds the key to Cullen in his loyalty to the papacy as an "Ultramontane of the most uncompromising type", "a Roman of the Romans". Bowen calls Cullen's Irish opponents, like Daniel Murray, sympathetic to Protestants and to English policies in Ireland, "old Gallicans"; and "new Gallicans" those like Archbishop MacHale of Tuam, anti-English, anti-Protestant and favourable to nationalism of a populist if not a revolutionary kind.

This exact "old" and "new" Gallican terminology does not appear in any letter which Bowen cites from Cullen's correspondence, but even if it is the clue to Cullen's policies, it is not the Ariadne's thread to Irish Catholicism. "Gallicans" denied an independent papal infallibility in faith and morals, and a plenary Roman jurisdiction beyond Rome; and they assigned an independent temporal authority to kings and spiritual authority to bishops, who are infallible in a General Council. Irish Anglicanism needs the most careful definition. In spite of the moderate Gallican tradition at Maynooth, all Irish churchmen accepted Rome's ultimate jurisdiction, and though MacHale opposed defining papal infallibility in 1870, that doctrine had no relevance to most of the disputes in the Irish Church, which were over state-sponsored mixed education, state

regulation of Catholic education, and since payment of the Irish prebendary. Rume's authority was not the essential issue dividing MacHale and Murray from Cullen, even though MacHale's independence as a metropolitan was challenged by Cullen's powers as the Pope's Apostolic Delegate. The defines "Gallicanism" as an attempt to local autonomy, as the more bishops defended their local use of "statutes", but these had already been attacked by "Gallicans" like Bishop Doyle. MacHale's rejection of Rome's political directives was not "Gallican", as most Catholics accepted O'Connell's dictum, "our religion from Rome, our politics from Ireland". For Bowen, Gallicanism is King Charles's head, crowding out more complex explanations. It was too frail a phantasm to explain modern Irish ecclesiastical history.

Yet Cullen's "Ultramontanism" does not describe the reconstruction of the Church on Roman models of discipline and devotion; even though this was begun by Cullen, as like Doyle and Murray. Cullen would piety and order, which Ultramontane ideas could secure. Yet in principle he had much in common with MacHale: an O'Connell nationalism, the will to keep Church and state apart, except for state funding of denominational education, a concern for the poor, and keen dislike of Protestantism. In this anti-Protestantism especially, Cullen shared the feelings of his flock, and it is too much to ascribe to him, as Bowen does, the responsibility for the growing gulf between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland.

Cullen regarded as a "strong Gallican" Charles William Russell, a Professor at later President of Maynooth College; but Russell, the subject of a pleasant biography by Ambrose Macaulay, was too perfectly balanced a scholar-ecclesiast to be "strong" about anything. Russell had a part in converting Newman, who aptly described him as "ways gentle, mild, unobtrusive, unassuming. He let me alone." Russell himself marked of two religious giants from the past that "Bossuet was unambiguously right and Pascal was unambiguously wrong"; and there can be doubt whom he preferred. Russell died in 1870, after a long illness, and his death was a loss to the Church. Russell's historical scholarship for which his name is held in blessing. After all the liberal swordsmen of the spirit, Father Macaulay reminds us that the island of the saints has saints after all.

point in two ways. Thodberg's mastery of Grundtvig as a preacher and a hymn-writer is another.

Problems of translation abound, and most of them are to be seen in *Tradition and Renewal*. They become uncomfortably evident in the collection of extracts in *A Grundtvig Anthology*, edited by Niels Lyhne Jensen. Grundtvig's prose, with its long, sprawling sentences and its combination of the erudite and the vernacular, the archaic and the colloquial, is almost as difficult to render into English as the verse. Grundtvig forged his own language. The extracts gathered here have been carefully selected to reflect different aspects of his work, but one is bound to doubt how much of the force and quality of the original they convey to a reader previously unacquainted with Grundtvig's writing. It is ironic that Grundtvig, who himself strove so hard to be a translator from Latin and Greek, from the land and Anglo-Saxon, from German and English, should prove to be so resistant to those who wish to transpose his own work into other languages.

All the contributors to *Tradition and Renewal* are Danish; they cannot but see their subject from close up. For a longer, larger perspective on the man and his work we must await the day when we have a major study from a non-Danish writer. That day should not be too long delayed. On any showing we have here one of the great figures of nineteenth-century Europe, a man who did not fit easily into the confines of his own small country, and whose ideas seem often to be more relevant to our own day than they were to his own.

Visionary moments

Colin Greenland

RICHARD COWPER
The Titian Factor and other stories
 The Titian Factor and other stories
 150pp. Gallancz. £7.95.
 0575 034408

ROBERT SILVERBERG
Valentine Pontifex
 347pp. Gallancz. £9.95.
 0575 034440

Like T.S. Eliot in the rose garden, Richard Cowper's narrators have the experience but miss the meaning. Some while later they tell us about it: "All this happened long ago, and in another country." Seating us comfortably, they begin: "When I was your age - twelve, thirteen...". "In the summer of 1937 when I was one year old...". "Last night I dreamt I was a child again...". From the future they call to us, looking back over what we cannot see, hypnotized by knowledge and uncertainty. On one time in a derelict old spaceport a wisp of alien herb gave Kevin Morrison a scent of the Mars he would never see. It has haunted him for the rest of his life. "Everything that's worth having you carry around inside you - memories; dreams; feelings. The rest is just a load of useless, worrying junk." In 1992, as the alphas lift her away from Huacaloc, Virginia Clarke touches the ancient talisman old Amsula placed around her neck and wonders, did it happen, or was it a dream? In 1994, a biochemist waits for the world to end, smothered in the mutant algae he has inadvertently caused to breed; he dreams of his father's apple tree.

Cowper's manner is modest. Not for him the hallucinatory glamour of J. G. Ballard or the languor of Ray Bradbury. His visionary moments are opaque; words may not violate them. In "What Did the Deezies Do?" nine-year-old Richard looks at an antique painting and finds unspeakable fear.

He dragged my gaze away from the sombre eyes of the long dead Isidoro and shivered as though someone had trodden on my grave. What I felt then I could not express, for I had glimpsed a rent in the veil of reality and what lay beyond it was strange and dark and threatening.

The veil of reality, the footprint on the grave: for uncanny experiences these are commonplace terms. Cowper does not intend to startle or provoke us; he wants our attention and sympathy. Nor is what lies beyond always a threat. Virginia Clarke's annunciation at the sacred pool comes in coloured lights and the sound of joyful laughter, but before we can quite see we are whisked away via a shift of viewpoint: "and far off down the winding whispering galleries old Amsula heard the sound for which he had been waiting". In "The Titian Factor" Sarah Jackson looks back on her adolescence in the early twenty-second century, helping out at a residential centre for Sempteros, artificially immortal men and women. With the development of meditative disciplines and a sense of consciousness, the world has rediscovered orgasm; od and animism. Sarah's transcendental experience comes with a forbidden act of sexual and spiritual intercourse with a moping Semptero.

I felt as if my skin was all charged up and a stream of invisible sparks was leaping across from me to her. I was shaking like a leaf on a tree... I remember hearing a voice whispering the odyle mantra and I suppose that must've been me. That's when Gaia shook the branch I was clinging to and I was whisked away. After that nothing mattered any more.

Elsewhere, there may be strife: unemployment and uprisings in 1993; "urban sterilisation exercises" against the slum-dwelling of "the old industrial area" in North Africa, Russia, Burma and God knows where. Cowper ventures no nearer, but the echoes of distant conflict at least signal that melancholy is not a wholly adequate response to mortality. It is this, and the occasional ripple of humour, that give a saving piquancy to his mildness.

Robert Silverberg's *Valentine Pontifex* is a sequel to *Lord Valentine's Castle*, in which a wandering juggler discovered that he was actually a king; Coronal of the whole planet of Majipoor, detoured by a treacherous enchantment. In that first volume Silverberg contrived to stretch out the tale of Valentine's restoration to 500 pages, not by working it in to an elaborate polyphonic pattern but by padding it with the stuff of romance. The result is not so

much of the intricate and agonizing process of regaining a lost identity, but a meandering odyssey of bizarre adventures, relieved by routine debates on truth and virtue and interludes of local colour. Its outcome is never in doubt. From the first Valentine is inundated with oracles and prophetic dreams. (Dreams are the medium of social regulation on Majipoor; this thought control is not presented as disturbing, or even ambiguous.) Valentine has a destiny. We must accept that, as must everyone he encounters. Pure of heart, princely of birth, he overcomes resistance with the blinding light of his own righteousness. Doubters stammer apologies and kneel; opponents surrender their arms.

A more cynical exploitation of the current vogue for reassuring fairy-tales would be hard to find. *Lord Valentine's Castle* satisfied readers' wishes for a great big safe world where nice things flourish and evil succumbs to forgiveness, and also Silverberg's declared wish to discover "what I was worth on the current market". The naïveté of the narration was not the author's: Silverberg is the man who wrote dark, complex fictions like *Thorns* and *Dying Inside*, skilful anatomies of alienation, uncertainty and conscience. *Valentine Pontifex* is, perhaps, Silverberg's act of conscience for *Lord Valentine's Castle*.

Majipoor is an enormous planet, home of twenty thousand million people, human and otherwise, living in peaceful co-existence under a peculiar oligarchy of four: the contemplative Pontifex; his chosen executive and heir the Coronal; and the King and Lady of Dreams, responsible for sending oracular messages of punishment and encouragement respectively. The loud Oedipal resonances no less than the absurd inadequacy of the system betray its origins in infantile fantasy. In *Valentine Pontifex* Silverberg admits its fragility by pulling it apart.

How many thousands of years of peace there had been! What a pleasant world, what a smoothly functioning world... And now it was ending. Poisonous rain comes from the sky, gardens wither, crops are destroyed, families begin, new religions take hold, ravenous crazy mobs swarm toward the sea.

The aboriginal Piuivars, dispossessed by colonists from Earth fourteen thousand years before, have finally cooked up a retaliation of horrendous plagues and bio-engineered predators with awesome appetites. All this is immensely satisfying to those of us who had begun to despair of Silverberg, not just because nastiness is so much more interesting than purity, but because at last there is some real tension in the narrative, and no easy way out of its problems. The broken and repetitive time-structure of the opening chapters, centred on Valentine's visionary swoon at a state banquet, show Silverberg working to bring to *Valentine Pontifex* the dramatic complexity and vigour he smooched out of *Lord Valentine's Castle*. Not only the linear serenity but the cushioning assumptions of that romance are challenged as Valentine, with customary humility, goes off to beg pardon for his race from the Queen of the Piuivars, while his Regent and attendant princes aver, with some warmth, that pacifism is no longer appropriate.

Unfortunately, it is much too late. The accumulated weight of complacency in Silverberg's creation overcomes his better judgment. There is no way out; but market forces do permit anything as radical as a disastrous ending. Global riot, famine and revolution are therefore progressively reduced to the machinations of one fanatic leader, who is then eliminated, most plausibly, suffocated with forgiveness. The devastation disappears from view as the royals close ranks. *Valentine Pontifex* ends not with any vision of reconstruction, but with the joyous investiture of the new Coronal. They all live happily ever after.

The National Book League is now inviting entries for the £3,000 H. H. Wingate prize which is awarded annually to the book which best stimulates an interest in Jewish themes among a wider reading public. Submissions may be fiction or non-fiction and should have been published in Britain during the current calendar year. The closing date for entries is September 30. Details and entry forms are available from Sue Bennett, National Book League, Book House, 45 East Hill, London SW18 9JH.

Short histories

Savkar Altinel

CECELIA HOLLAND
The Belief Gold
 305pp. Gallancz. £8.95.
 0575 033762

A ninth-century Frankish pilgrim returning from the Holy Land rescues an attractive young girl from a group of soldiers on a lonely road near Constantinople, and suddenly finds himself caught in a power struggle between the Byzantine Empress Irene and her enemies which makes even the fierce rivalry between the capital's charioteers, each of whom is determined to wear the Golden Belt of championship, seem tame. The talented and prolific Cecelia Holland's best novel to date has a good plot, skilfully handled, but its main triumph lies in the way it manages to bring to life a civilization even more alien and incomprehensible to Westerners than the Turks who destroyed it.

LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS
Exit Lady Masham
 169pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £7.95.
 0297 783483

The story of how Abigail Masham, a penniless cousin of the powerful and ambitious Sarah Churchill, wife to the great Marlborough, rose from being her relative's protégée to being her adversary at the court of Queen Anne, before lapsing into obscurity following the death of the monarch. A sad and beautiful book, Augustan in its lucidity and its view of human vanity, if not its language.

PHILIP MCFARLAND
Seasons of Fear
 250pp. New York: Schocken. \$15.95.
 08052 38506

No sooner has Charles Alexander Corimer, the youngest son of the fourth Earl of Cavendish, arrived in the New World with his monkey on a chain, his two greyhounds and his black slave than the latter, representing an investment of £40, bolts. There is, however, worse to come; it is 1741 and soon a burglary and a series of fires convince the citizens of Manhattan that a "Negro Plot" is afoot and that it is necessary to hang all the suspected inarguable or burn them at the stake. Philip McFarland is an academic historian and his reconstruction of one of the forgotten episodes in colonial American history is a touch too scholarly in places for easy reading, but it is done with intelligence and care, and the picture of pre-Independence New York is convincing and memorable.

RICHARD WOODMAN
The Bomb Vessel
 216pp. John Murray. £7.95.
 07195 41131

The beginning of his fourth adventure finds Nathaniel Drakwater of the Royal Navy fretting on dry land after failing to get a ship of his own. Soon, though, his old protector Lord Dungarthy intervenes, and he is given command of an old bomb vessel and sent to the Baltic, where Nelson's temporary disapproval of him does not prevent Drakwater either from doing his best for his wastrel of a brother fleeing the gallows, or playing a crucial part in the Battle of Copenhagen. Less full of confusing naval jargon than its predecessors and considerably enlivened by the presence of a number of new characters, including a ship's surgeon with a talent for composing instant doggerel.

BERNARD CORNWELL
Sharpe's Enemy
 351pp. Collins. £8.50.
 000224245

Bernard Cornwell's hero Richard Sharpe, sent in earlier books to a variety of other Iberian locations by the Peninsular War, is here despatched from Wellington's winter headquarters in Flanders to the small village of Adreidos, which has been taken over by an "army" of

deserters from both sides - all bent on rape and pillage. The French initially help him, but then turn out to have secret plans of their own, and a full-scale battle ensues. Well-constructed and well-written, as always, with a bonus in the form of a dramatic (and apparently final) appearance by Sharpe's old enemy, the obscene Sergeant Obadiah Hakeswill.

RON HANSEN
The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford
 305pp. Souvenir Press. £8.95.
 0285626418

In 1882 the career of Jesse Woodson James, Civil War veteran, gang-leader, ruthless killer and folk hero, came to an end when he was shot dead by a confused nineteen-year-old youth who had worshipped him for some time. Ron Hansen's aimless novel manages to miss all that is interesting in an event pregnant with implications about both the American obsession with success and its inevitable corollary: the senseless killing of prominent individuals. And there isn't even any attempt to exploit the opportunities for comedy afforded by Jesse's ridiculous Shakespeare-quoting brother Frank.

JORIN WINGATE
William the Conqueror
 335pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £7.95.
 0297 782320

Detailed, almost year-by-year account of the Conqueror's life that leaves one wondering why he felt the need to seek Saxon enemies when he already had so many Norman and French ones. Useful as an introduction to the period, but without either a guiding conception of William's character or a definite story line to recommend it to the ordinary reader.

NICHOLAS CHASE
Locksley
 280pp. Heinemann. £7.95.
 0434 122173

Returning from the Crusades to find his family killed and his ancestral home destroyed by a protégé of King Richard's treacherous brother John, Robert Godfrey Bouvier Atheling, Fourth Earl of Locksley, assumes the name of Robin Hood and begins a career as an outlaw and undercover agent which takes him from Sherwood Forest to London and the Continent. Exciting, mysterious, beautiful, surely one of the most enjoyable historical novels of the decade.

RICHARD CONDON
A Trembling Upon Rome
 292pp. Michael Joseph. £8.95.
 07181 22410

International bankers are trying to take over the Vatican; there are whores in soma of the top beds in Europe, and everywhere vicious murders are being committed. It is all meant to be happening in the fifteenth century, of course, but it is difficult not to be reminded of some more recent scandals, and it is probably no accident that the characters frequently speak like the *mafiosi* in the author's last book, *Prizzi's Honour*. A bitter, cynical novel which pursues, with considerable elegance, Condon's great theme: the exploitation of power.

ROSALIND LAKER
Jewelled Path
 378pp. Methuen. £8.50.
 0413517802

Irene Lindsay's love affair with Art Nouveau and her decision to become a jewellery designer bring her into conflict with her father, a wealthy gem merchant of strongly traditional views, but also cause romance and adventure to come her way. Rosalind Laker has always been fascinated by crafts and craftsmen, and it is not surprising that this novel dealing with the most crafts-orientated of art movements should be her best yet.

Potlatch ceremonies

Reyner Banham

BURTON BENEDICT (Editor)
The Anthropology of World's Fairs: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915
176pp. Scolar Press. £25.
0859676765

The Palace of Fine Arts, designed by the unique talent of Bernard Maybeck, is one of the great gems of San Francisco – a city not over-decked with architectural jewels – and for a long time it seemed the only considerable survivor from the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915, at which it was a great popular success. Now, however, it turns out – one of those open secrets of the Nobody-ever-asks-about-it type – that there was another great treasure surviving but, being stored in the Lowrie Museum of Anthropology, it was "effectively lost to the human race" as the saying still goes in some circles at Berkeley. Exhumed and exhibited, it proved to be a vast deposit of artefacts and documents from what may have been the most rewarding Great Exposition ever from the anthropological point of view.

The *Anthropology of World's Fairs* is a sort of catalogue de-luxe of that resurrection exhibition, put together by the show's organizer, Burton Benedict. Professor of Anthropology at Berkeley, and various campus colleagues and museum scientists who worked on it with him. Since the title, though unavoidable given the nature of the enterprise, is somewhat mis-

leading, it is useful to state briefly what is to be found in these generously proportioned and well-illustrated pages.

The title-essay, by Professor Benedict himself, would have been better designated "World's Fairs: an anthropologist's perspective" and raises methodological and other questions which must be discussed later. The remaining two-thirds of the book deal with the political pre-history of the fair (Marjorie M. Dobkin), the architecture of the buildings (Gray Brechin), the fine and applied arts (Elizabeth N. Armstrong) and public interpretation of the whole in press and literature (George Starr). These last four are solid, workmanlike and appropriately prosaic; that is to say their perspective is short enough for really close readings of the texts and artefacts, and all are interpretative in the current modes. "The exposition signifies something other than itself; it is a sign with a larger referent..." or "This exhausted Indian clearly symbolised the extinction of a race – a degrading attitude..." or "The Panama Pacific International Exposition was a communal recreation of a make-believe past for the raw young settlement of California..." Painstaking, cautious, Berkeleyite stuff, reflecting local preoccupations of the 1980s that seem to find highly suggestive pre-echoes in the local preoccupations of the 1910s, and a very useful coverage of an exhibition that must now seem almost as odd and provincial as the Festival of Britain in 1951, when viewed in the perspective of the general history of World's Fairs.

Such a historical perspective was clearly

among the aims of Benedict's front essay. It contains, for instance, displayed comparison tables of buildings and pavilions, categories of exhibits, and attendance and months of opening, but fairs that appear in one table don't appear in others, and a number of important fairs are omitted altogether. There are problems, admittedly (the legal status of some fairs is dubious, figures may not be available for others) but there are established scholarly conventions such as the footnote for dealing with them.

This is not just a perfectionist quibble; the deficiencies of the tables are matched by a curiously impressionistic quality in the essay itself. Assertions are made which may well be based on all the evidence but the whole of the evidence is not always laid before the reader and one has no clear idea how much one is being asked to take on trust. Alongside some telling observations – for instance, that the rise of the Olympic Games drew off much of the element of international competition from World's Fairs – there are sweeping assertions that, for example, the New York Fair of 1939 "marked a watershed", and after that World's Fairs were less important. Less important to whom? Not to engineers, architects, hucksters, movie-makers, display specialists, transportation innovators, politicians, amusement-ride designers, soft-drink vendors, and the crowds who flocked to Seattle in 1962, the "illegal" New York Fair of 1964, Montreal's Expo '67 and the Osaka World Fair of 1970. Indeed, Expo '67 seems to be gaining retrospective stature as one of the key monuments of the culture of the 1960s.

Agreed, however, that international exhibitions after the Second World War were indeed different, less interesting to one kind of anthropologist and less easily contained within the

taxonomies and procedures that make possible Benedict's finest trope: World's Fairs as *potlatch* ceremonies (a thought that might have sustained far more extensive treatment than Benedict accords it here). And, of course, he is excellent on his own topic of the presentation/exploitation of exotic people by and in World's Fairs.

However, somewhere in here may lie the hidden cause of the tendency of this book to fall into two scantily-related halves. The Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915 made on the communal memory of Californians and others who saw it. The reason why the Palace of Fine Arts was preserved and then, more recently, elaborately reconstructed and restored, was that it was the most telling memorial to what the Fair was perceived to be about. Just as the Skylon – a high-tech exclamation-mark without convincing means of support – epitomized the looney bop of the Festival of Britain in 1951, so the erudite and elegiac nostalgia of the Palace summed up (and proved viable) the attempt to recreate a make-believe past for Californians, and to turn the accidental ruins of the great earthquake, barely a decade before, into ruination as an art-form, a cultural sublimation of a great natural and social disaster.

In terms of the anthropology of modern California, that is what the Fair was all about, and the essays in the second half of the book make it clear that this is the case, and that suggests that the progressive positivism of the great Victorian fairs had begun to fade long before 1939. The definitive general history of international exhibitions remains to be written. The particulars of this one suggest that it may require a special kind of general theory.

Positivism or meaning

Robin Evans

ALBERTO PÉREZ-GÓMEZ
Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science
400pp. MIT Press. £27.
0262160919

According to Alberto Pérez-Gómez there are two choices for architecture: positivism or meaning, and they are in opposition to each other. A line is drawn, sides are taken and the subject of his book – the application of geometry to European architecture from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century – is treated as contested territory. He claims that between the Renaissance and the present day architectural meaning has been almost totally obliterated by scientism.

Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science begins with the evocation of an architecture replete with transcendental meaning, based on geometry, but unhampered by theoretical regulation. The new science of Galileo and the philosophy of Descartes threatened this stage of grace, introducing the possibility of a rational geometry detached from its origins in mysticism: Claude Perrault, towards the end of the seventeenth century, was the first to bring these new ideas into the heart of architectural debate by questioning the validity of aesthetic proportions derived from number ratios. The first part of the book deals with the controversy surrounding Perrault's transgression. The next part is largely concerned with those who, though tainted by the new rationality, managed to retain access to architecture's original symbolic power: Guarini, Boullée, Ledoux. Two final parts, the most valuable and interesting, describe the increasing number of scientific techniques gathered around architecture during this period and add with an account of Druid's functionalism.

I cannot remember having read a book so broad in conception, so well informed and wide-ranging, so deeply concerned with historical development, yet so doggedly insistent in the reiteration of one unchanging idea. Everything, it seems, is subject to decay except the opinion of Alberto Pérez-Gómez, of which there are helpful reminders placed at regular intervals throughout. For example: "In Claude Perrault's theory, architectural proportion lost

for the first time, in an explicit way, its character as a transcendental link between microcosm and macrocosm." Architecture still had much else to lose however, and by the end of the book all that is left is a mercilessly polished stump.

With determination Pérez-Gómez has searched out and digested material rarely made use of by architectural historians, whose characteristic disdain for the technical is usually expressed by ignoring it. Static stereotomy (drawing for stone cutting, projective geometry, descriptive geometry, mensuration, fortification, statistics, materials science, surveying and functional planning) – a serious study of these, showing how they affected architectural thinking and practice has been undertaken before. But Pérez-Gómez is compelled by his sense of loss to describe them as agencies of destruction, the only capability he has any interest in relating being their power to overwhelm architecture's primordial meaning.

This leads to perversions and infidelities. When, for example, he compares the new geometry of Girard Desargues with that of Euclid, he is forced to present a manifest weakness of Euclidean geometry (the parallel axiom) as if it were a strength. Conversely, the most tangible aspect of Desargues's theorem, the principle of convergence, is presented as the most abstract and unreal. Pérez-Gómez then claims that in using Desargues's *Universal Method* of projection (as distinct from the theorem) draughtsmen could draw things without having to visualize them. Somewhere here is an interesting idea, even though Desargues's *Method* may not be the best place in which to study it. His way of looking at history permits Pérez-Gómez to sea far back (to the lost age of meaning in architecture) and a long way forward (to the present day) while everything in between is regarded as being in transit between these two remote bottoms. So he does not explore the idea and its ramifications. Instead Desargues's *Method* is trimmed, turned upside down, labelled "protopositivism" (a term of retroactive abuse applied also to the work of Perrault and Soufflot) and passed to posterity. This history, mobilized against the forces of functionalization and instrumentalization in architecture, is itself functional and instrumental.

Smiling through

Eric Korn

MORDECAI RICHLER (Editor)
The Best of Modern Humour
542pp. Allen Lane. £10.95.
0713916869

It's a common enough scene: person having a considerable social success with jokes, funny sayings and humorous tales, setting the table on a roar, praise and admiration, "it's the way you tell them". Touch of superbism comes into play, wretched fool of fate starts to talk about own preferences, nature of humour, etc. Never does audience sympathy faster dissipate. You like whom? Ken Dodd makes you do what? You've never been able to raise the ghost of a flicker of a smile at which? General outbreak of disgust and horror, which a similarly frank and open confession of cannibalism, incest or monstrosity would not evoke. Happened to me once: reached a position of such ease and intimacy with some folks I could say anything to them. Said that W. C. Fields was boring self-indulgent lush with a sense of timing of leaky clefts. End of conversation, ease, intimacy, the lot. Just because I said that W. C. Fields was a... hey, come back!

Surest way of losing friends and admirers then, must be to go into print with one's taste in humour. Make it worse, restrict it, as Richler does, to modern prose humour (people get less upset if you don't find Aristophanes a gale of guffaws, will forgive you for liking Harry Graham or bating Ogden Nash, humorous verse not being a serious matter, excepting always Clive James). Make it still worse, write a preface, citing other writers gloomily trying to be funny about being funny, underlining your own more perverse editorial judgments, eg, Dorothy Parker "no longer very funny".

So Mordecai Richler – himself, let it immediately be said, a fine and outstandingly funny novelist (*Cocksure*, *The Incomparable Atuk* and of course *Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*) – graphically and self-sacrificingly illu-

minates the phrase "on a hiding to nothing". He will be hated for what he leaves out, despised for whom he puts in, and if by chance reader agrees with his choice of writer he will hate sample. Two examples from many: a stodgy piece of early, surreal Beachcomber ("so Mr Cowparleigh's little scheme miscarried"); the great Myles na Gopaleen represented only by quantities of infamous Keats-and-Chapman jokes, of which the whole point, if any, is bathos – his B. Arch is worse than his bight, there's a nip in the heir, please Byrne when Red – jokes that can be defended as a part of the whole na Gopaleen corpus, essential to a warts-and-all portrait – but who wants the warts without the face?

Likewise there are guests invited for worthiness in other fields, like striking miners at a radical chic party. Saul Bellow is a great man and a witty one, but not a card-carrying humorist: his account here of flying to Israel with a plane-load of offensively Orthodox fellow-travellers is absorbing, wry, even amusing: but laugh aloud before breakfast, the Richler test? I doubt it. Similarly Groucho Marx is a preeminently funny man, or at least one-third of three funny men; not a funny writer, as adequately demonstrated here. The story about Warner Brothers complaining that they had used the name "Casablanca" before *Night in Casablanca*, Groucho riposting that he and his siblings had used "Brothers" before Warner Brothers, was better as part of oral history, before Groucho published his definitive version; and his account of an evening with T. S. Eliot makes it sound like the most wretchedly embarrassing encounter since Laocöon and the serpents.

Again, Kurt Vonnegut, who can't tell a plain unvarnished tale without being mortally funny, is here represented by a sad attempt to tell a funny story, one that demonstrates that humorous science fiction is an oxymoron like frothy concrete, at best hard to achieve and a structurally undesirable material if it does happen.

For humour is not a genre. No one reads humorous books as they might read westerns

or thrillers, at least not without going crazy. (I knew a bookseller once who specialized in humorous books. Youths full of smiles and jollity would enter his shop, come out after a few minutes elderly and grey: he had to move to Haverfordwest.) Humour is a mode, not a theme; a humour anthology is like an album of allegretto passages, or at best like a concert of piccolo solos. Humour shelves in bookshops become, have you noticed, fissiparous with embarrassment, subdivide into humorous dog books, humorous golf books, Jewish jokes, Jewish dog jokes, Jewish golf jokes, Hasidic-Jewish nine-hole golf-course jokes.

Let me, besiring in mind that reviewers of humorous anthologies are even better placed to give universal offence, tabulate. There are sixty-four pieces anthologized here, of which twenty-one caused me pleasure (P), twenty-one indifference (I), twenty-one embarrassment (E), one, an uproarious piece by Stanley Elkin about the appalling desires of a drugstore pharmacist, equal quantities of P and E. Does the P/E essay represent pay-dirt or slag-heap? I haven't enough data to be sure, but am grateful for the gold-dust (Wilfred Sheed, Veronica Geng, Roy Blount Jr funny and unfamiliar; grateful notes of recognition to Runyon, Liebling, Perelman, Heller, Philip Roth still industriously whacking-off, Amis, K. Naipaul, V. S. Bainbridge, B., Ken Tynan for one of the few enduring and endurable parodies).

More statistics: fifty Americans (where Pynchon, Brautigan?), twelve Britons (where

Frayn, where Stoppard, where Angus Wilson, where, for historical interest, Stephen Potter?), one Irishman (where Donlevy? where, yes, Beckett, Joyce?), one Canadian plus Editor (where Margaret Atwood?) No Indians, Jamaicans, expatriate Russians, but one piece (under by-line Truman Capote), apparently written by Venusian which has read article "Earth Humour" in *Encyclopaedia Galactica*.

Fifty-two men, twelve women: Nora Ephron and Lisa Alther representing Raunchy New Woman mode, Marianne Moore in wonderful exchange of letters with Ford Motor Co, who wanted help in naming their new wonder-car; finally came up with "Edsel" all by themselves. A classic Stella Gibbons, passé Cyra McFadden (*The Serial*, an everyday saga of Northern Californian brand-names), soon-to-be-passé Fran Lebowitz, durable Beryl Bainbridge. Where Margaret Atwood?

The oldest writer is Stephen Leacock: a historical landmark, because it contains "rode madly off in all directions", but more than P; the newest is Ian Frazier in the charmingly unwholesome "Dating Your Mom". Highest Indifference level: Oliver Jensen's "The Gettysburg Address in Eisenhowerese"; highest E-Level, George S. Kaufman's silly-vulgar playlet "If Men Played Cards as Women Do"; almost the best joke in the book is on the acknowledgments page where Samuel French have insisted on inserting an elaborate CAUTION explaining that it's theirs and you mustn't dream of acting it without sending them ten dollars.

Joking apart

Bernard O'Donoghue

MAUREEN WATERS
The Comic Irishman
204pp. Albany: State University of New York Press.
0873957660

Never judge a book by its cover? This well-meaning and sometimes politically aware discussion of the treatment of the laughable Irishman from the early nineteenth century to the present day has on the front a bad drawing of a pipe-smoking, Aran-jerseyed, flat-capped figure (he has presumably put his whiskey down in order to stuff his hands into the pockets of his moleskin trousers), set in a grass-green background. In its time, it is hardly less offensive than Tenniel's apes were in theirs. And it is representative of Maureen Waters's failure to take her subject seriously enough, despite her bouts of righteous indignation about the treatment of her Victorian forebears. She convicts Somerville and Ross (travestying Matthew Arnold by associating him with their attitudes) of "racist consciousness", a strong term; yet she blithely concludes "their faults are outweighed by the merits of their best stories", illustrated by such pieces of idiomatic Irish usage as "I had to put the height of the house of curses on it before Mary would believe me". This side of Ms Waters finds Buck Mulligan a welcome relief from Stephen Dedalus in the early part of *Ulysses*; but Dedalus's attitude is that of Seamus Deane's terse observation: "A reputation for linguistic extravagance is dangerous, especially when given to small nations by a bigger one which dominates them. By means of it, Celts can stay quiet and stay put."

But of course the literary Celt can never stay quiet, whether in the representation of the Anglo-Irish or the twentieth-century Irish comic writers in whom the earlier tradition is so strong. Waters's book is divided in two along these lines: the first half, "The Folk", deals with the outsider's view (Dublinia interestingly linked with the Anglo-Irish here) of the funny ways of the country people; the second half, more cryptically called "The Misque of Satire", is concerned with the reflections of the Gaelic traditions of satire (as traced by Vivian Mercier in *The Irish Comic Tradition*) in modern Irish writers: Joyce, Beckett, Flann O'Brien, Kavanagh, O'Casey and Behan. The real difference between the two halves though is not a matter of literary tradition but (with rare exceptions like the native Irish but up-

wardly mobile William Carleton) of race. Is it all right for the Irish to tell Irish jokes? Are the savagely satirized Gaels of O'Brien's *Poor Mouth* less stereotypically offensive than Somerville and Ross's *Flurries and Slippers*? They are funnier, of course, and a more sharply observed satire; but that is a different matter. This book repeatedly raises these questions indirectly, but never addresses them. Waters senses uneasily that the answer must be political, but she doesn't follow through the historical logic of what she is saying. After dealing with the portrayal of the 1916 rebels by O'Casey (which she seems to me to misread by overstating the satirical negativity: why did O'Casey claim a tragic element in these plays?) and Behan's burlesques of his IRA days, she finds the real world different: "Whatever one's political perspective, it is not humanly possible to think of the H Block prisoners starving themselves in the old Republican style as 'comical objects'." This is simply an imaginative failure to distinguish past from present; we don't laugh at the death of Johnny Boyle in *Junos*, and no doubt the original audience didn't either. Waters does make some good points along these lines, as when she tellingly quotes Maurice Bourgeois's observation in 1913 that the Phylloxy portrayed the Irish as "anything but fit for self-government". The play was principally resented, not as a sentimental slur on Irish manhood, but, in its political context, for providing yet another demeaning, stereotypical view of Ireland at a time when Home Rule was on the statute book.

The principal objection to *The Comic Irishman*, then, is that while it is a fair introductory conspectus of the modern stereotyping tradition of its literary subject, it doesn't seriously evaluate its principles. There are other faults too: Waters makes it clear that she doesn't know the Irish language, but surely the book could have been checked through by someone who knew some Irish. The two errors in "un-aignean gan cuineas" (for "un-aignean gan cuineas") are bad enough; but "Niamh" ("Niamh"), "usque bhenha" (for "usque", at worst) and "Snami da den" (for "da en") should have been avoided. Such errors occur throughout. They might be tolerated as nothing worse than typographical sloppiness in another context; but here, where the very subject is the quaint barbarity of Irish traditions, they reinforce the impression given by the spud-in-the-Bogus cover that the whole matter is so humorous that accuracy in the presentation doesn't matter much. Despite its worthy intentions and often sympathetic views, finally the book perhaps does more harm than good.

Hugh Macdonald

J.M. RICHARDS
The National Trust Book of Bridges
214pp. with black-and-white and colour photographs. Cape. £12.50.
0224021050

Bridges, as Sir James Richards points out in his introduction, satisfy both aesthetic and functional instincts in the most public and direct fashion. They offer a service to all and guard no hidden secrets: few have secret chambers or moving parts (Tower Bridge is probably the most deceitful of them). To take delight in the variety and history of bridges is thus a pleasure open to all who travel about the country by road or rail, and the zealous bridge-watcher soon develops the knack of leaning out of train windows to observe the structure maddeningly concealed below the track or of slipping down footpaths to view the arch just crossed. When fine old bridges are superseded by parallel modern structures and not pulled down, the observer is afforded a front-row view, as this book's jacket illustration of the three bridges at Conway shows.

This survey offers a personal selection of British bridges, roaming freely from end to end of the country, with brief but highly informative introductions to each category. All the great and familiar specimens are there. The author is meticulous in distinguishing between those bridges that survive and those that do not, mindful perhaps of the books that lead you to a bridge demolished many years ago. A chapter on bridge designs that were never executed is particularly compelling. Bridges are listed by county or region but also divided by category, so that the visitor to Clywd, for example, will have to look at the end of every chapter to see which bridges are worth visiting; the lack of a map is a further handicap.

The selection is sometimes unfair to bridges which may be inferior but which are so close as to be mandatory to visit. One should never stop to see Gwynn's fine English Bridge at Shrewsbury, for example, without a detour to the Welsh Bridge, built by Tilley and Carline in 1795, a little upstream, not so ornate but well proportioned. Another Cinderella, omitted here, is the Framwellgate Bridge in Durham, overshadowed by the Elvet Bridge a stone's throw away with its remnants of a medieval chapel and ten arches of various sizes. Framwellgate Bridge, on the other hand, also passed over by Eric de Maré and Geoffrey N. Wright

in similar compilations of British bridges, is earlier than Elvet Bridge and has been restored many times, yet its two ribbed arches of 90 feet are sturdily impressive and uncommonly flat for their time. Even the Prebend's Bridge, a comparative youngster from 1778, and the hard-edged concrete Kingsgate footbridge by Ove Arup of 1963, both in Durham, gain more attention.

Engineering feats and social changes are carefully chronicled. The seventeenth century, for example, is curiously poor in notable bridges when compared to the torrent of magnificent examples from the later eighteenth century, countless numbers of which are still in everyday use. None of London's fine eighteenth-century bridges has survived below Richmond; it is sad to note (especially when compared to Paris's superior collection), Sir James has an especially useful chapter on bridges in private parks, mostly built to adorn the landscape and neglected in most surveys either because of their inutility or their inaccessibility, and he also singles out railway footbridges as worthy of closer attention than the commuter usually gives them.

The photographs are abundant and skillfully chosen to focus on the main feature, so that Saltash bridge, for example, is shown before its clumsy companion roadbridge was built. The three Berwick bridges, individually magnificent but untidy in ensemble, are also singled out. Stockport Viaduct is seen through the fog and rain of yesterday but the photograph of the technologically imaginative Coalbrookdale – the world's first iron bridge – is disappointing.

Sound facts and a keen eye grace this book. There are apposite quotations from Celia Fennies, Scott, Burns, John Claudius Loudon and early historians of the railways. Motorway bridges, perhaps more frequently observed than any others in modern times, are subject to careful scrutiny. In general the author's wide architectural knowledge is supported by sage enthusiasm, sometimes held on too short a rein. It is time someone trumpeted more noisily the unbelievable world record held by the Humber Bridge, not only the longest span in the world but easily the longest. Whereas the Golden Gate held the record for nearly thirty years and was eventually surpassed (by the Verrazano Narrows Bridge) by a mere 65 feet, the Humber Bridge surpasses the Verrazano by 365 feet. Yet the motorist is greeted by no more than signboards demanding money and restricting speed. A little rationalizing in Humber-side would not go amiss.

As we were

P. J. Waller

A broad welcome is in order for The English Working Class, a facsimile series of twenty-nine volumes published by Garland in New York. They include major works of inquiry and observation, which both reflected and influenced the formulation of social and industrial policy between 1890 and 1914. The editor, Standish Meacham, has expert credentials as the author of *A Life Apart: The English working class, 1890-1914*. His and the publishers' policy as to the composition of the series is not made explicit but, plainly, one consideration was the sheer availability of texts. Probably no American library holds the entire collection in original form. The main sources from which copies have been taken are the British Library and, in America itself, the Library of Congress and Harvard, Princeton, and Yale University Libraries. Many university libraries, therefore, in America and elsewhere, will seize this opportunity to add to their collections, as will individual scholars who have exhausted their searches of second-hand bookshops.

But rarity value does not necessarily correspond with importance. In one or two cases the book which best represents a particular theme or the special standpoint of an author is not that which finds inclusion here. The problem posed by Charles Booth, however, is made unique by his many-sidedness and his prolific output. The seventeen volumes of the *Life and Labour of the People in London, 1889-1903*, which ensure his fame as a pioneer of the empirical social survey are avoided by Garland. To single out a sample volume, even the *Conclusions*, would be folly; anyway, other publishers have produced edited extracts in recent years. It was wise, therefore, to focus upon another aspect of Booth's reputation: his championship of old-age pensions as a right of citizenship by public endorsement. Even so it is a little strange to republish *The Aged Poor in England and Wales, 1884*. As a testimony to Booth's awesome ability as an accumulator, and as a mine of information for modern historians, this work has value; but the case for choosing it in preference to *Pauperism, a Picture, and the Endowment of Old Age, an Argument, 1892*, or *Old Age Pensions and the Aged Poor: A proposal, 1899*, is not self-evident. In these publications Booth debates the question with a compendiousness and cogency which he does not attempt in the Garland volume.

For the rest it was necessary to strike a balance between academic and commercial considerations, and here one can fathom the editor's and publisher's policy more easily. Thus C. F. G. Masterman's *From the Abyss, 1902*, is rightly valued for its anxious assessment of the mafficking masses of urbanized England:

Our streets have suddenly become congested with a weird and uneasy people. They have poured in as dense black masses from the eastern railways; they have streamed across the bridges from the marshes and desolate places beyond the river; they have been hurried up in incredible number through tubes sunk in the bowels of the earth; emerging like rats from a drain, blinking in the sunshine.

Powerfully impressionistic piece though this is, it is impossible to pretend that *From the Abyss* is superior to *The Condition of England, 1909*, as a statement of Masterman's opinion and concerns. Presumably, it was publishing considerations which decided for the former since the latter was reprinted by Methuen in 1960. Not that this rule is universal. The omission from the series of *At the Works, 1907*, Lady Bell's classic study of a manufacturing town (Middlesbrough), may be explained by the David and Charles reprint of 1969; yet the same firm in the same year reprinted Alfred Williams's *Life in a Railway Factory, 1915*, which gains a place in Garland's series.

This may be a miscalculation or oversight but simple misfortune surrounds the selection of Mrs Pember Reeves's *Round About a Pound a Week, 1913*: Virago picked Garland to the post in 1979 with a much cheaper reprint of this. Virago has also stolen a march with a paperback reprint of Clementine Black (ed), *Married Women's Work, 1915*. Virago has this edge also by having commissioned introductions to its reprints, whereas it is an overall weakness of the Garland series that it confines its editor's introduction to a general advertisement. Separate prefaces which defined the

contemporary context and historical significance of each volume would enhance the value of republication.

These reservations aside, Professor Meacham and the publishers deserve congratulation for the service they are rendering to students of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century English working classes. They make newly and widely available important works bearing upon particular places and problems. The salience of A. L. Bowley and A. R. Burnett-Hurst's *Livelihood and Poverty, 1915*, is unquestionable, as is that of B. S. Rowntree's *Poverty, A Study of Town Life*, here reissued in the amplified second edition of 1910. It is good to have in



"A Poor Family" 1910 reproduced from Edwardian Children by Joanna Smith (187pp. Hutchinson, £9.95, 0 09 147910 X).

addition the survey of the Outer London Inquiry Committee, edited by Edward Howarth and Mona Wilson, *West Ham, 1907*, while W. H. Beveridge's seminal *Unemployment: A problem of industry, 1912*, is complemented by the less well-known report of Seebohm Rowntree and Bruno Lasker, *Unemployment: A social study, 1911*.

An especially interesting group of books deals with women's work and its associated problems. These are being republished with an eye to the current vogue for feminist history, no doubt, but this was equally an emphasis of the age—not only Clementine Black and Maud Pember Reeves, but Edward Cadbury, Cécile Matheson and George Shann's Birmingham survey, *Women's Work and Wages, 1909*; the Women's Industrial Council's inquiry, edited by Ramsay MacDonald, *Women in the Printing Trades, 1904*; two reports of the Women's Co-operative Guild, *Working Women and Divorce, 1911*, and *Maternity, 1915*; and Anna Martin, *The Married Working Woman, 1911*. B. L. Hutchins's general survey, *Women in Modern Industry, 1915*, contains comparative data from other countries as well as a sceptical assessment of the provisional effects of the Great War on women's work. The plight of the female work-force occupies a large part also of the Women's Industrial Council's study *Domestic Service, 1906*, each of which addresses the crucial question whether women in fact displaced men in industry or simply did different kinds of jobs.

Another area of substantial concern for late Victorian and Edwardian progressives was youth. The phase of development reached by the twin forces of urbanization and industrialization by 1900 was adjudged to have brought special difficulties for adolescents—socially, in the range of temptations, from mere loafing about on street corners to active involvement in vice and vandalism, which town life encouraged; economically, in the obstacles placed in the way of training for stable employment, as the expansion of the distributive trades and service sector multiplied the number of "blind-alley" or "dead-end" jobs and as changing technology in manufacturing industry regarded skill and brought a decline in apprenticeships. Arnold Freeman's inquiry on behalf of Birmingham City Council summarizes this concern in its subtitle—*Boy Life and Labour: The manufacture of inefficiency, 1914*. Freeman's study is complemented by three other well-chosen examples: Reginald Bray, *Boy Labour and Apprenticeship, 1911*; C. E. B. Russell, *Social Problems of the North, 1913*;

and E. J. Urwick (ed), *Studies of Boy Life in our Cities, 1904*.

The wish to improve the urban and industrial environment found expression in the town-planning movement. Its literature is not directly represented in Garland's series, understandably perhaps, since very little planning involved working-class participation. But housing reform did bear very obviously on working-class experience, with important consequences for both material comfort and family life. Addresses given at Manchester University by Seebohm Rowntree and Arthur Pigou, *Lectures on Housing, 1914*, consider this issue, posing chiefly the question of how



"A Poor Family" 1910 reproduced from Edwardian Children by Joanna Smith (187pp. Hutchinson, £9.95, 0 09 147910 X).

pay for improvements: answer, by means of qualified state subsidies. The lecturers also take note of the contemporary garden city and allotments campaigns and refer to Continental experiments.

Housing is touched on in other volumes of the series also. For Bowley and Burnett-Hurst, it is among the most important indexes of relative poverty in their survey of Northampton, Warrington, Stanley and Reading. Howarth and Wilson too give it prominence in their account of West Ham, while for the social worker, like Helen Bosanquet of the Charity Organization Society, or the district nurse, Margaret Loane, imperfect housing conditions were what working-class wives had to make the best of in their pursuit of sound domestic management.

Bosanquet's *Strength of the People, 2nd edn, 1903*, and Loane's *From Their Point of View, 1908*, however, are valuable chiefly as examples of the ways in which middle-class reformers observed and (mis)understood working-class attitudes. These are remarkable texts, combining keen sympathy, shrewd perception and sober assessment with, in Bosanquet's case

Volumes in this Garland series include:

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M. Loane: *From Their Point of View, 216pp.*, £30. 0 8240 0113 3
J. Ramsay MacDonald (Editor): *Women in the Printing Trades: A sociological study, 213pp.*, £20. 0 8240 0114 1

especially, purple passages of blazing indignation and gross ignorance. How like "they" really were is a consideration which weighs heavily upon both authors, whose complexity is indicative of the increasing self-consciousness about class in the Edwardian period. Concern about the class inequality inherent in the codification and administration of justice are manifest in E. A. Parry's *The Law and the Poor, 1914*, an unexpected but wholly estimable inclusion in the series.

Central to the debate about class, and with clear political instructions for budget-making and social policies, is the celebrated account of the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunity by Chiozza Money, *Riches and Poverty, 1906*, a standard point of reference for any historian of the Edwardian age. Of more dubious value is Henry Solly's *Working Men's Social Clubs and Educational Institutions, 1904* edition. This is an abridgement of the text first published in 1867, though it is supplemented by some of the author's sermons and by an appreciation of Solly, the founder and first secretary of the Club and Institute Union, from his successor, B. T. Hall. Modern historians need to understand the part played in working-class life by clubs as well as pubs; but the reprinting of Solly's text brings out how much editorial introductions were needed to the volumes in the series, for the state of the club movement was very different in 1904 from that described by Solly in 1867. A controversy about the serving of alcohol in the clubs had been resolved in the defeat of the "dry" party, and this was symbolic of a wider transfer of control and change of character. It was the extent to which the clubs' working-class clientele was running its own affairs, having successfully organized and taken over institutions founded by middle-class patrons and once governed in the interest of "rational" recreation and improvement, that was the really striking development from the 1870s. The Solly-Hall history, therefore, needs to be treated with caution.

Walter Besant's *East London, 1901*, similarly, is far from constituting a comprehensive or satisfactory survey. Besant was prone to romanticize and only rarely succeeded in narrowing the distance that separates middle-class author from working-class subjects, though his attempt to counter fatalistic assumptions about degenerate and unregenerate East London is worthy of note. The hope of bridging this class gap is expressed in the title of Alexander Paterson's description of South London, *Across the Bridges, 1911*, which completes the series.

Altogether this collection makes a rich resource, supplying plentiful evidence about both waste and vitality in working-class lives. Moreover the observers themselves are of much subject for study as the observed: the series is precious too for the picture it gives of middle-class partialities and purposes.

Sale of literary and historical books and MSS

Sarah Bradford

The earliest and most expensive of the manuscripts in Sotheby's two-day sale of English literary and historical books and manuscripts was an important Irish historical document, the *Red Book of the Earl of Kildare*, a 155-page volume of transcripts of grants, inquisitions, title-deeds and other documents relating to the family and estates of the Earls of Kildare from medieval times. It was compiled by Philip Fitzliff in 1503 at the orders of Gerald Fitzgerald, eighth Earl of Kildare and virtual ruler of Ireland under the English almost continuously from 1477, when he succeeded his father as Deputy Governor, until his death in 1513. As a complete record of the Fitzgerald estates it was eagerly sought by Thomas Cromwell's agents after the execution of the rebel tenth Earl in 1537 to facilitate their confiscation of his lands, but has, however, remained in the family's hands until its sale by the present Duke of Leinster who might well have uttered a delighted "Cromwell" (the family war-cry) as the manuscript sold for £25,300 to Maggs against an estimate of £8,000-£12,000. The Duke also sold to the same buyer for £2,420 a fine heraldic manuscript, a transcript of the *Red Book* executed by the then Ulster King of Arms, William Roberts, in 1633.

Twenty years later in date and also with an Irish connection, the *Ballades dedicated to the Lady Victoria Uvedale* by their author John Patrick Carey... London. Dublin. Tew. Wickham. (1652) *Writ out by the Author's Own Hand. An* (1653) was a delightful object, a collection of poems written in a fair hand by their author and embellished with pen and ink vignettes. Carey was the son of the first Viscount Falkland, Lord Deputy of Ireland; a gentleman poet of the order of Lovelace, his work remained unpublished until John Murray obtained what was then the only known manuscript which he presented to Sir Walter Scott who included the poems in an edition of seventeenth-century verse, keeping the original in his library at Abbotsford. The Sotheby's manuscript was purchased by Quaritch for the Brotherton Collection at the University of Leeds for £12,650.

Carey was described by Evelyn as "a witty young priest who afterwards first came over to our church"; also included in this sale was an important private collection of papers by an earlier generation of Catholic priests whose faith was of a fiercer and more durable nature. These English recusants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries included William Allen, founder of the English College at Douai, Thomas Fitzherbert and Robert Parsons, who not only accompanied Camplon as a missionary

priest to England in 1580 but subsequently, as Prefect of the Jesuit Mission, masterminded the sending of priests there from Europe. Most of the thirty lists relating to English Recusancy failed to sell, despite their interest; estimates were high and the English Catholics were, after all, on the losing side. In contrast a signed letter by Sir Francis Drake, a power of attorney for the management of his estates made out to his wife and his brother Thomas, written on May 30, 1588, the day the English fleet set out against the Armada, made £10,450 to Joseph.

There was controversy of the kind much enjoyed by the book world over the authenticity of a set of books hitherto thought to have been owned by Jane Austen. The seven-volume first edition of Richardson's *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, the property of the Earl of Mount Charles, is listed number twelve among the twenty books owned by Jane Austen in David Gillingham's *Bibliography of Jane Austen*, 1982, and Sotheby's catalogue declared the signatures in five of the *Grandison* volumes to be identical with a Jane Austen signature in a volume of *Rasselas* in the Beinecke Library at Yale as illustrated in an article by Gilson on "Jane Austen's Books". In the *Book Collector*, 1974. Now, however, an expert source claims that a comparison of the Yale Jane Austen signature in the *Rasselas* with Jane Austen ownership inscriptions in eleven volumes with an impeccable provenance, Arnaud Berquin's *L'Ami des enfants*, 1782-85, now in the Houghton Library at Harvard, shows that they are not in the same hand. In short, if the Houghton copy is right then the Yale and Mount Charles copies are wrong. Despite a saleroom notice at Sotheby's acknowledging the controversy, the *Grandison* was bought for £3,850 by John Fleming of New York and the question as to whose is the real Jane Austen has not yet, publicly at least, been resolved.

There were no doubts, however, about the authenticity of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's working notebook for *The Seraphim and Other Poems*, some 150 pages of drafts, revised and reworked, for most of the poems in the collection and approximately 250 apparently unpublished lines. Hailed by the catalogue with a touch of hyperbole as "one of the most important and visually dramatic poetical manuscripts of the modern period to have been offered for sale in recent years", it was sold for £20,900 to Joseph, while a letter by E. B. B. discussing romance and marriage written two months before she married Robert Browning went to the same buyer for £1,705. Evidently the intensely cultivated field of E. B. B.'s poetry and romantic life remains attractive to collectors as does the no less exposed saga of Bloomsbury. Bloomsbury items have become an inevitable

feature of modern literature catalogues—here were Leonard Woolf's address book (£395 to Burwood) and eight volumes of Virginia's pocket engagement diaries ("E. Bowen tea") three of which were bound by herself, sold for £1,760 to Rota.

"In 1950 I went to Belfast", Philip Larkin recalled ("An Interview with *Paris Review*" in *Required Writing*, 1983) "and things reawoke somehow. I wrote some poems, and thought, these aren't bad, and had that little pamphlet *XX Poems* printed privately." "That little pamphlet", one of 100 copies, estimated at £200 to £250, went for £900 to Gekoski. Graham Greene's staying power was also demonstrated by the price paid, £1,760 by Maggs, for an odd item, the FBI files on Greene, together with the autograph draft and revised typescript of his *Spectator* article on the subject. "One idic moment it occurred to me", Greene wrote, "that I might find some amusement and even a little instruction by applying... for the release of documents concerning me under the Freedom of Information Act. I certainly found some amusement but little instruction. In the forty-five pages of material which was sent to me nearly sixteen were blacked in heavy ink. So much for 'Freedom of Information'..." William Gilding fared less well with first edition presentation copies of both *Pincher Martin* and *The Spire* failing to sell. Nor did anyone want the first (and only) edition of Lawrence Durrell's first novel, *The Pied Piper of Lovers*, 1935, rare and estimated as such at £2,500 to £3,500. Predictably there were several copies of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the most expensive being a proof copy with the title printed as "1984" which was bought by Maggs for £1,265.

The top price for a printed book in the sale was the £24,200 paid by Maggs for the King James Bible, 1611; this copy, the first issue of the first edition of the Authorized Version, was the property of Sir Richard Acland. A first edition of Dickens's *Pictures from Italy*, 1846, a presentation copy to his old friend Thomas Bead, also made a very high price, £4,620 to Sawyer. Copies of *Dracula* tend to be well-thumbed, but here was a first edition, first issue, of the book in very fine condition with a presentation inscription by Bram Stoker to Professor James Dewar, the noted physicist. It was acquired by Quaritch for £3,520 against an estimate of £700 to £900. The first edition of James Joyce's *Cricket, An Heroic Poem*, 1744, is rare, only three other copies being listed by Foxon; bound in a volume with six other poems it was sold for £1,155 to Mackenzie. "Half Cricket glorious, manly, *British Game*", Dance began his panegyric, and the next two books describe the match between Kent and England played on the Artillery Ground, London, on June 18, 1744. Kent won.

Over this growth presided a series of ten librarians, from Thomas James, a friend and correspondent of Sir Thomas Bodley, closely involved in the setting up of the library and the initial purchases of books, and responsible for its first catalogue, to Thomas Price (librarian 1768-1813). During this period six catalogues of printed books were produced, the first in 1605 and the last in 1795 (a list of the purchases at the two sales mentioned above). Of these the 1620 catalogue is a landmark in library history, being "the first published alphabetical catalogue of a public library". It, and for many years the 1674 catalogue, begun under Thomas Lockey and completed by Thomas Hyde, were widely used in other libraries (at the Bodleian library until 1760), as indeed was the later 1843 catalogue.

All these things are covered admirably by Philip, but briefly. Sir Edmund Craster in more spacious days devoted over three hundred pages to one hundred years. Here two hundred years are compressed into 113 pages (plus notes) and although Philip's exemplary brevity of style does not leave one feeling breathless, yet one wishes for greater detail, and more dispassionateness to cap the instruction and pleasure the book provides. There are few misprints, the most notable being on page 75 where, Anselm Bandurina, name appears as Baudurina (also in the index).

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

Barker, A. L. *Relative Successes* 864
Benedict, Burton (Editor). *The Anthropology of World's Fairs: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915* 876
Bottom, W. F. *The Language of 1934: Orwell's English and ours* 859
Bowen, Desmond. *Paul Carter and the Shaping of Modern Irish Catholicism* 874
Cantor, Paul A. *Creation and Creator: Myth-making and English Romanticism* 862
Cowper, Richard. *The Tithonian Factor and other stories* 875
Crystal, David. *Who Cares About English Usage?* 859
Davis, Philip. *Memory and Writing: From Wordsworth to Lawrence* 862
Dieck, Thomas M. *The Businessman* 864
Elliott, Ralph W. V. *Thomas Hardy's English* 860
Finnegan, R. C. *Appearances of the Dead: A cultural history of ghosts* 863
Galford, Ellen. *Moll Cutpurse: Her true history* 864
Ginnett, Angelica. *Deceived with Kindness: A Bloomsbury childhood* 861
Gendron, François. *La Jeunesse sous Thermidor* 873
Guy, Rosa. *A Measure of Time* 864
Hartcup, Guy, and T. E. Aldrich. *Cockcroft and the Atom* 867
Holt, Hazel, and Hilary Pym (Editors). *A Very Private Eye: The diaries, letters and notebooks of Barbara Pym* 861
Hunter, Jane. *The Gospel of Gentility: American women missionaries in turn-of-the-century China* 872
Jaggs, Richard (Editor). *Dr Johnson by Mrs Thrale: The "Anecdotes" of Mrs Piozzi in their original form* 870
Jensen, Niels Lynne (Editor). *A Grundtvig Anthology: Selections from the writings of N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872)* 874
Johnston, Kenneth R. *Wordsworth and The Recluse* 862
Kat Kin Yung. *Samuel Johnson 1709-84* 870
Keenen, Desmond J. *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: A sociological study* 874
Kolve, V. A. *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The first five Canterbury Tales* 865
Lewis, Gwynne, and Celia Lucas (Editors). *Beyond the Terror: Essays in French regional and social history, 1794-1815* 873
Loren, Federico Garcia. *Selected Letters* 866
Macaulay, Ambrose. *Dr Russell of Maynooth* 874
Mallarmé, Stéphane. *Correspondence: Novembre 1897-Septembre 1898* 866
Meacham, Standish (Editor). *The English Working Class (series)* 878
Pittrich, Eric. *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* 860
Pérez-Gómez, Alberto. *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* 876
Phillip, Ian. *The Bodleian Library in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* 879
Richards, J. M. *The National Trust Book of Bridges* 876
Richer, Mordecai (Editor). *The Best of Modern Humour* 877
Silverberg, Robert. *Valentine Pontifex* 875
Slavio, Morris. *The French Revolution in Miniature: Section Droits-de-l'homme, 1789-1795* 873
Stafford, Pauline. *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers* 865
Terrill, Ross. *The White-Boned Demon: A biography of Madame Mao Zedong* 872
Thodberg, Christian, and Anders Porttupidan Thysen (Editors). *N. F. S. Grundtvig. Tradition and Renewal: Grundtvig's vision of man and people, education and the Church, in relation to world issues today* 874
Todd, Alexander. *A Time to Remember: The autobiography of a chemist* 867
Vovelle, Michel. *The Fall of the French Monarchy* 873
Waters, Mayreen. *The Comic Irishman* 877
Welch, Cheryl B. *Liberty and Utility: The French Ideologies and the transformation of liberalism* 873
Wharton, T. F. *Samuel Johnson and the Theme of Hope* 870
Woronoff, Denis. *The Thermidorean Regime and the Directory 1794-1795* 873
The National Library of Scotland. *George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EW*, has last month published the *Scottish Gaelic Union Catalogue* at £10. Edited by Mary Ferguson and Ann Matheson, it records entries for works in Scottish Gaelic, or containing an appreciable amount thereof, in eighty-three Scottish and major British libraries.